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What's Out There.®

Washington, D.C.



The Cultural Landscape Foundation
connecting people to places™

tclf.org



Photo by Dean George



The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF)

TCLF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 1998 to connect people to places. TCLF educates and engages the public to make our shared landscape heritage more visible, identify its value, and empower its stewards. Through its website, publishing, lectures and other events, TCLF broadens support and understanding for cultural landscapes.

tclf.org

Welcome to *What's Out There*[®] Washington, D.C., organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF).

This guidebook provides photographs and information about 38 examples of the capital's rich cultural landscape legacy, many of which were featured in *What's Out There Weekend Washington, D.C.*, June 18-19, 2022, a weekend of free, expert-led tours.

Established in 1790 on 100 square miles at the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, the location of the District of Columbia was selected by George Washington. Two major plans guided the city's development and continue to be the most consequential and evident design imprints on the nation's capital. Pierre L'Enfant's plan of 1791 created a monumental core overlaid by a grid of streets and transected by wide diagonal avenues lined with trees, ornamented with sculpture, and visually connecting significant vistas. In 1851 landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing was commissioned to prepare designs for the National Mall, the Capitol grounds, and the White House. In 1901 the Senate Park Commission was assembled by James McMillan, comprised of architects Daniel Burnham, Charles Moore, and Charles McKim, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The McMillan Commission, as it came to be known, developed designs for an interconnected system of parks where the city's residents could enjoy the natural environment within a civic urban setting.

Through the latter part of the 20th century and into the new millennium, the District has continued to develop along the plans set forth by L'Enfant and the McMillan Commission. Evolving philosophies of memorialization and increased security concerns have challenged the continuity of its landscape design, yet these two plans have miraculously created a foundation from which all work happens within a common, symphonic design framework. With almost 7,500 acres of parkland and nearly 10,000 acres of National Park Service-managed property, the District is both a city for the American people and an international destination.

This guidebook is a complement to TCLF's digital *What's Out There Cultural Landscapes Guide* to Washington, D.C., an interactive online platform that includes a history of the city and more than 100 site profiles, as well as overarching narratives, maps, historic photographs, and biographical profiles. This print guidebook and the digital guide dovetail with TCLF's web-based *What's Out There*, the nation's most comprehensive searchable database of cultural landscapes. Profusely illustrated and carefully vetted, the searchable database currently features more than 2,300 sites, 12,000 images, and 1,100 designer profiles. It has been optimized for mobile devices and includes *What's Nearby*, a GPS-enabled feature that locates all landscapes within a given distance, customizable by mileage or walking time.

A special word of thanks is owed to all who participated in the creation of the guidebook and online guide. We are likewise grateful to the site owners, stewards, volunteers, financial supporters, and other friends of TCLF who made the guidebook and tours possible. We appreciate your interest in *What's Out There Washington, D.C.*, and hope you will enjoy experiencing the region's unique and extraordinary landscape legacy.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
President and CEO, The Cultural Landscape Foundation

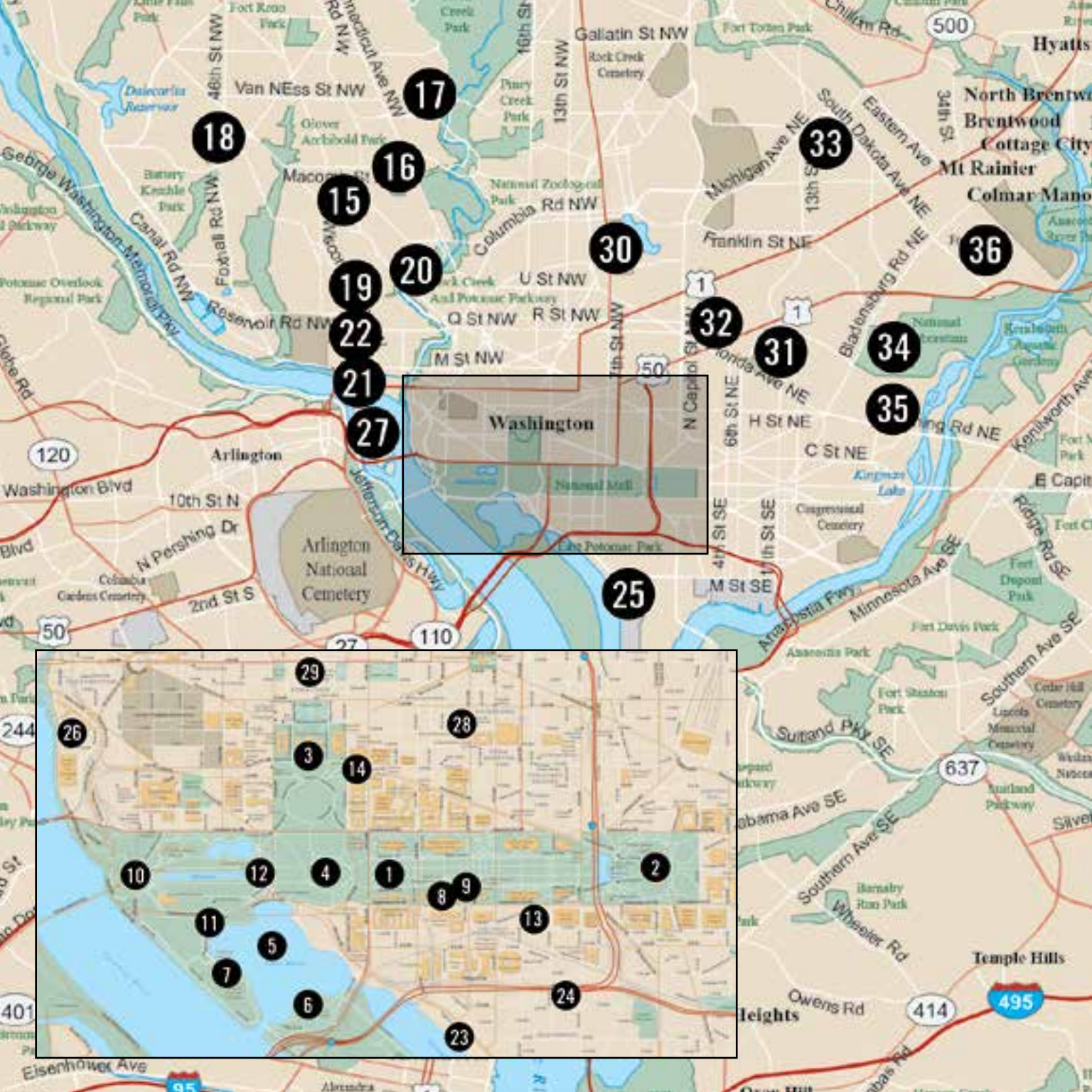


Photo courtesy Library of Congress

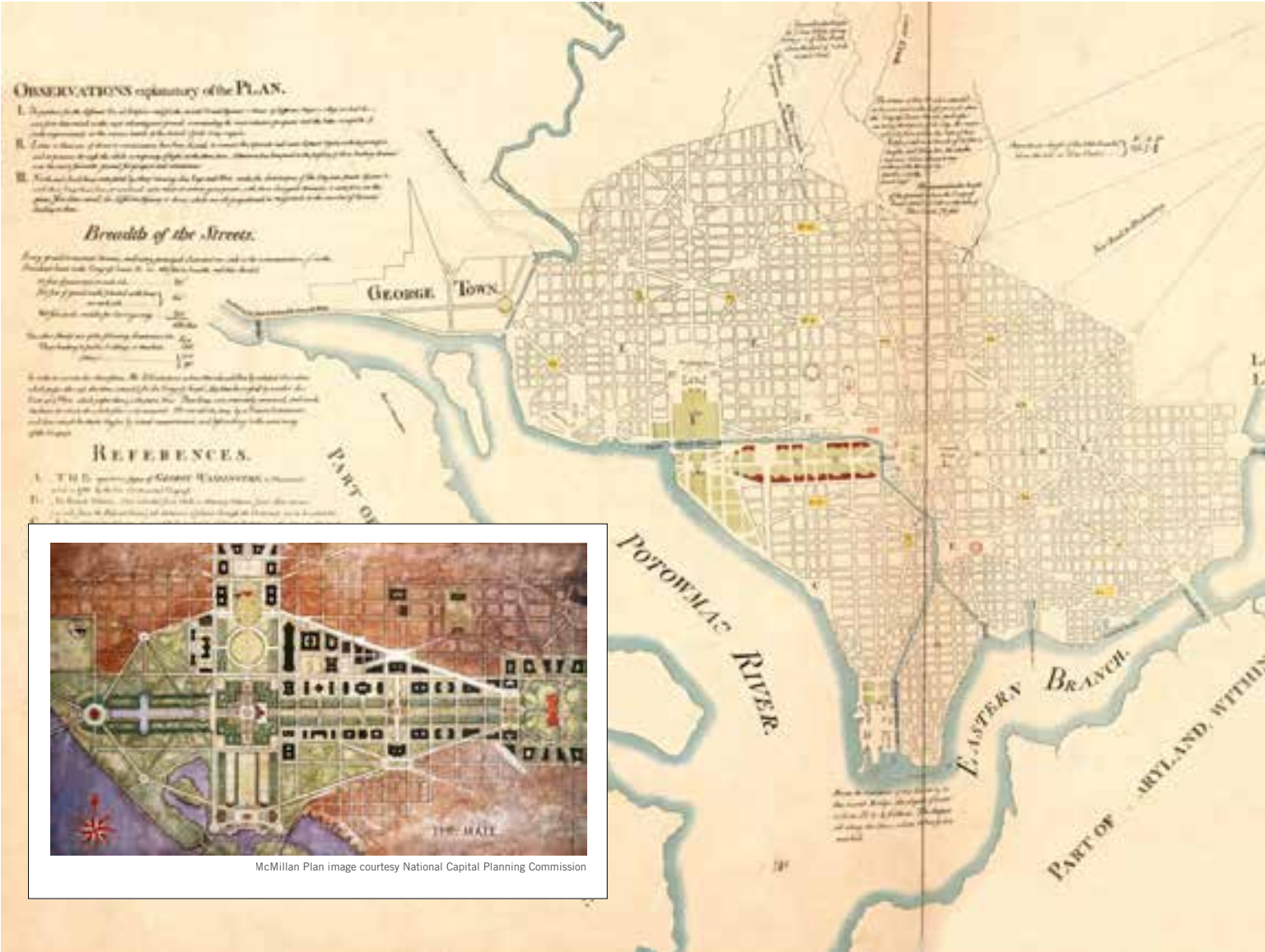
Capitol Hill and the National Mall

List of sites

- 1 National Mall
- 2 U.S. Capitol Grounds
- 3 White House Grounds
- 4 Washington Monument
- 5 Tidal Basin
- 6 Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- 7 Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- 8 Enid A. Haupt Garden
- 9 Mary Livingston Ripley Garden
- 10 Lincoln Memorial
- 11 Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
- 12 National World War II Memorial
- 13 Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial
- 14 Pershing Park
- 15 Washington National Cathedral
- 16 Tregaron Estate
- 17 Hillwood Estate, Museum, and Gardens
- 18 American University
- 19 Dumbarton Oaks
- 20 Dumbarton Oaks Park
- 21 C&O Canal National Historical Park
- 22 Tudor Place
- 23 The Wharf
- 24 Capitol Park Towers
- 25 Harbour Square
- 26 Watergate
- 27 Theodore Roosevelt Island National Memorial
- 28 Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
- 29 Black Lives Matter Plaza
- 30 Howard University
- 31 Gallaudet University
- 32 Alethia Tanner Park
- 33 Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land Garden
- 34 National Arboretum
- 35 Langston Terrace Dwellings
- 36 Fort Lincoln Park

L'Enfant and McMillan Plans

L'Enfant Plan image courtesy Library of Congress



McMillan Plan image courtesy National Capital Planning Commission

Sited in a shallow topographical bowl at the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, the national capital was originally laid out by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791. The historic plan of Washington is the foremost example in the United States of two combined, nationally significant city-planning styles: Baroque and City Beautiful. Many elements of the L'Enfant Plan that took shape in the nineteenth century exist today, including ceremonial parks and greenswards surrounding the seat of the federal government. Like the axes of the compass, an irregular grid of streets (designated numerically and alphabetically) is spread across four quadrants, with the U.S. Capitol serving as the declared center point. At the convergence of diagonal and orthogonal thoroughfares, a system of parks, reservations (from large open areas to small geometric spaces), streets, avenues, open spaces, and vistas give physical shape to the design of the city. The L'Enfant Plan was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Beginning in 1901-02, the Senate Park Commission (known as the McMillan Commission) substantially amplified L'Enfant's plan. Chaired by Senator James McMillan and including architects Daniel Burnham, Charles McKim, and Charles Moore, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the commission sought to restore and expand L'Enfant's plan with the formal grandeur of an extended, cruciform National Mall, framed symmetrically by elms and punctuated by monumental neoclassical architecture in the Beaux-Arts manner. Today, both the Baroque and the City Beautiful contributions of this civic plan are significant examples of their respective design philosophies. Combined, the two are even more outstanding as a unified, holistic entity unparalleled in American city planning.

Landscape Type:
City Plan
Park and Parkway System

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
Benjamin Banneker
Daniel H. Burnham
Pierre L'Enfant
Charles McKim
Charles Moore
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Related Landscapes:
Arlington National Cemetery
Dupont Circle
East Potomac Park
Farragut Square
Franklin Square
Lafayette Park
Lincoln Memorial Grounds
Logan Circle
Meridian Hill Park
McMillan Park
McPherson Square
Mellon Memorial Fountain
National Mall
Pennsylvania Avenue
President's Park
Rock Creek Park
Sheridan Circle
Simon Bolivar Park
Thomas Jefferson Memorial
Tidal Basin
U.S. Capitol Grounds
Washington Circle
Washington Monument
West Potomac Park
White House Grounds

National Mall

Landscape Type:

Public Park -
National Park
Institutional Grounds
Commemorative Landscape

Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:

Daniel H. Burnham
Heritage Landscapes
HOK
Thomas C. Jeffers, Sr.
Pierre L'Enfant
Charles McKim
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Related Landscapes:

Constitution Gardens
Enid A. Haupt Garden
German-American Friendship Garden
Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden
L'Enfant Plan
McMillan Plan
National World War II Memorial
Union Square
Vietnam Veterans Memorial

In Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 Plan, The National Mall was to be a 400-foot-wide, mile-long avenue anchored by the Congress House on the east and a statue of George Washington on the west. An east-west canal, built in 1820 on the north side of the mall, connected Tiber Creek to the Potomac River. Railroad tracks were laid across the eastern section of the mall in the 1840s, physically severing the Capitol grounds from the rest of the space. In 1851 President Fillmore commissioned Andrew Jackson Downing to design a public park, though his design for a naturalistic garden was never fully executed. During the Civil War, the mall grounds were used for military activities. The canal was removed in 1872 and in 1888 the Washington Monument was completed on the mall's western edge.

In 1902 the McMillan Commission submitted a plan to Congress calling for the restoration, development, and improvement of the mall. The Commission proposed a narrower 300-foot-wide greensward bordered on each side by four rows of American elm trees and lined by public buildings. In 1909 the railroad tracks were removed, restoring the continuity of the grounds. A bronze equestrian statue of Ulysses S. Grant, completed in 1924, bookends the mall to the east.

In 2007 the nonprofit Trust for the National Mall was founded to raise funds for the mall's preservation and engage the public through programming. Beginning in 2009 an interdisciplinary team led by design and engineering firm HOK, and including preservation landscape architects Heritage Landscapes, researched and mapped disturbances to the mall's landscape over time, using this data to sensitively restore the mall's turf, soil, and irrigation, and improve universal accessibility. The National Mall was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 and had its listing boundary extended in 2016.



Photo by Robert Laiberte



Photo by Sheila Thomson



Photo by Nancy Stiede

Photo courtesy National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution



U.S. Capitol Grounds

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Governmental Institution or Facility

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical
Picturesque

Designed By:
Charles Bullfinch
Montgomery Cunningham Meigs
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
RTKL Associates
Sasaki Associates
Jacob Weidenmann

Related Landscapes:
L'Enfant Plan
McMillan Plan

Following the expansion of the U.S. Capitol in the mid-nineteenth century, the task of redefining its surroundings fell to Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., who began the project in 1874. Olmsted created an idiom of restrained naturalism, obedient to the symmetry of the city and the National Mall, but using teardrop and oval-shaped paths to establish a more informal order.

Unlike Olmsted's parks and residential landscapes, the Capitol grounds deploy landscape in the service of architecture, not architecture in the service of landscape. Most important are the transitions orchestrated between the monumental edifice and its park-like setting. The periphery is densely planted with trees in order to mediate the confusion of the 21 radiating streets that converge there. Carefully selected openings in the groupings of trees and understory plantings are situated at optimal viewing points, dramatizing the appearance of the Capitol building and the unobstructed lawns and plazas at its base. Olmsted added a grand terrace along the western façade in order to give a proportionate foundation to the gigantic dome, and to extend the lines and materials of the building into its immediate landscape and cityscape contexts. Although park furniture is used sparingly, a number of site-specific benches, trellises, and lighting fixtures are placed throughout the site. Olmsted also situated a hexagonal brick summerhouse in the west lawn and enshrouded it with plants and trees as an idyllic respite from legislative stress. Following Olmsted, Sr.'s, death in 1903, site maintenance was continued by Olmsted Brothers.



Photo by David B.



Photo by Barrett Delaney



Photo courtesy Architect of the Capitol

White House Grounds

The centerpiece of L'Enfant's President's Park, the White House is the official residence and workplace of the President of the United States. The mansion, designed by James Hoban in 1792, was meant to have a vista of the Potomac River, now hidden by nineteenth century infill projects. The grounds have changed repeatedly over time, altered by virtually every U.S. President. The current general configuration is derived from Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s, plan of 1934-35, which advocated preserving the existing landscape with some elements removed and provided a landscape management plan still in use today.

The park-like setting, with carefully orchestrated groups of shade trees, underplantings, and open spaces, enhances the residential character of the site. Facing Pennsylvania Avenue, the symbolic North Lawn serves as the ceremonial entry to the mansion. The more secluded Upper South Lawn includes the East or First Lady's Garden designed by Rachel Lambert Mellon and the West or Rose Garden designed by Mellon with Perry Wheeler and renewed in 2021 by Oehme, van Sweden and Perry Guillot, Inc., the President's Patio, and a private swimming pool and putting green. In 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama added a 2,800-square-foot kitchen garden to the South Lawn, which was later expanded by a team of students from the University of Virginia's School of Architecture under the direction of Professor Elizabeth Meyer. The Lower South Lawn is a buffer from the public Ellipse grounds and is used for occasional activities such as the annual Easter Egg Roll. Due to security concerns, the grounds, surrounded by tall metal fencing, are closed to the public except for special events.

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Government Institution or Facility

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical
Picturesque

Designed By:
Henry Vincent Hubbard
Pierre L'Enfant
Rachel Lambert Mellon
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Oehme, van Sweden
Perry Guillot, Inc.
Perry Wheeler

Related Landscapes:
L'Enfant Plan
McMillan Plan



Photo courtesy National Archives



Photos by Eleanor Cox



Washington Monument



Established in L'Enfant's plan as a place of significance, the monument was intended to align with the visual axes of the President's House (White House) and U.S. Capitol. In the 1840s the Washington National Monument Society selected Robert Mills' 600-foot masonry obelisk to honor George Washington. The monolith's weight necessitated its relocation east of center, upon a prominent knoll. The cornerstone was laid in 1848, but its completion was delayed until 1888. The monument's 72-acre grounds changed frequently throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1851, Andrew Jackson Downing suggested an Evergreen Garden for Monument Park as part of his vision for the Mall. The McMillan Commission's 1902 plan rectified the skewed axis by proposing formal parterre gardens and water features, with recreational amenities south of the monument. The Sylvan Theater was carved into a grove of trees nearby in 1917. Intersecting ellipses surrounding the monument were designed by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1932 (Thomas Jeffers was the lead landscape architect), working in concert with an Advisory Committee that included Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and architect William Delano. Olmsted was supported by Henry Hubbard of the Olmsted Brothers on a planting design completed by the Works Progress Administration. A 1965 master plan by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) sought to return the grounds to their monumental formality. Following the terrorist attacks in September 2001, Olin Partnership employed curving granite walls designed to a comfortable seat height that would also unobtrusively enhance security. The firm also carefully regraded sweeping concrete pedestrian paths that brought visitors to the granite plaza at the monument's base, and renewed canopy and flowering tree plantings. The Washington Monument was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
National Park
Commemorative Landscape
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
William Adams Delano
Henry Vincent Hubbard
Thomas C. Jeffers, Sr.
Pierre L'Enfant
Olin Partnership
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Related Landscapes:
L'Enfant Plan
McMillan Plan



Tidal Basin

Historical Name:
Twining Lake

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
National Park
Commemorative Landscape

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
George Elberton Burnap
Paul Philippe Cret
McMillan Commission
Darwina Neal
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Related Landscapes:
Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
George Mason Memorial
Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
Thomas Jefferson Memorial
West Potomac Park

Initially called Twining Lake, this 107-acre body of water was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1882 and 1897 to dispel sediment from the Washington Channel. In 1902 the McMillan Commission re-imagined the Tidal Basin and its surrounding fill lands as recreational space, resulting in the creation of East and West Potomac Parks. In 1910, on the initiative of First Lady Helen Taft, some 3,000 cherry trees donated by the Japanese government were planted around the Tidal Basin by landscape architect George Burnap. An additional 3,800 cherry trees were planted in 1969 around Haines Point in East Potomac Park as part of First Lady “Lady Bird” Johnson’s beautification program. The quatrefoil-shaped Tidal Basin stores 250 million gallons of water daily between the Potomac River and the Washington Channel. The stone seawalls that line the basin are topped by aggregate paths that provide views of West Potomac Park. Overlooking the shoreline is the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, designed by John Russell Pope and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., on the site of a short-lived whites-only bathing beach; the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, designed by Lawrence Halprin & Associates (1997); the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial by artist Lei Yixin and ROMA Design Group (2011); and the George Mason Memorial designed by landscape architecture firm Rhodeside & Harwell with sculptor Wendy Moss (2002). Spanning the pool’s northern and southwestern lobe, respectively, is the Kutz Memorial Bridge, designed in 1941 by architect Paul Cret, and the Tidal Basin Bridge, created by engineering firm Alexander & Repass. East of the Kutz Memorial Bridge is the Floral Library, a quarter-acre seasonal floral display designed by National Park Service landscape architect Darwina Neal in 1969. In 2019 the Trust for the National Mall, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service launched the Save the Tidal Basin initiative to mitigate the threat of rising sea levels.



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum



Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Situated on the shores of the Tidal Basin, the Jefferson Memorial occupies a prominent position as the southern anchor of the District of Columbia’s meridian line, on axis with the White House and complementing the cross-axis of the Lincoln Memorial and U.S. Capitol.

Constructed between 1939 and 1943, John Russell Pope’s memorial structure includes a portico, a circular colonnade surrounded by marble steps, and a shallow open-air dome. Pope’s neoclassical structure is complemented by the symmetry of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.’s, Beaux-Arts landscape that transitions to well-treed pastoral grounds. Olmsted placed the memorial on a plinth of three circumscribed earthen terraces of equal width, with walls descending to meet a round drive previously lined with elms at its base. Axial views of and from the monument are framed with four clusters of hollies, pines, and evergreen shrubs. The paved north plaza affords expansive views across the Tidal Basin, while the park-like south side contains a central lawn and perimeter shade trees complemented by the pre-existing cherry trees of the Tidal Basin. Later alterations include a foreshortened landscape south of the memorial due to highway expansion, a reconfigured circular drive and north plaza, and the addition of perimeter security barriers. The Memorial was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
National Park
Commemorative Landscape
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
Henry Vincent Hubbard
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
John Russell Pope

Related landscapes:
McMillan Plan
Tidal Basin



Photo by P. Sinderbrand



Photo by Bradley Weber



Photo by Bill Dickinson

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial

Landscape Type:

Public Park -
National Park
Commemorative Landscape
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:

Modernist

Designed By:

Dean Abbott
Leonard Baskin
Neil Estern
Robert Graham
Lawrence Halprin
Lawrence Halprin & Associates
Thomas Hardy
George Segal

Related Landscapes:

Tidal Basin
West Potomac Park

In 1974, Lawrence Halprin was selected by the FDR Memorial Commission to design the 7.5-acre site adjacent to the Cherry Tree Walk on the western edge of the Tidal Basin. Halprin created a new sort of memorial, a progression of four galleries, or garden rooms, crafted in a narrative sequence to tell the story of the U.S. during the four terms of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency. The memorial's rooms and water features, built primarily of red South Dakota granite, use stone to express the fracture and upheaval of the times. Water, in the form of cascades, waterfalls, and pools, is a metaphorical component of the palette, with the volume and complexity escalating as the narrative progresses. The memorial also incorporates ten bronze sculptures and 21 carved inscriptions, quotations from FDR's speeches and radio talks. The sculptures, by Leonard Baskin, Neil Estern, Robert Graham, Thomas Hardy, and George Segal, depict images from the Depression and World War II, including a breadline and a man listening to a Fireside Chat on his radio. After complaints from the National Organization on Disability, a statue of the president seated in his wheelchair was incorporated into the memorial, the nation's first memorial designed to be wheelchair accessible. The memorial was dedicated by President Clinton on May 2, 1997. In Halprin's 2009 *New York Times* obituary, the FDR Memorial was described as Halprin's favorite project.



Photos by Roger Foley



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Roger Foley



Enid A. Haupt Garden

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution
Roof Garden

Landscape Style:
Postmodernist
Victorian Gardenesque

Designed By:
James R. Buckler
Jean Paul Carlhian
Lester Albertson Collins
Stuart O. Dawson
Sasaki Associates

Related Landscapes:
Mary Livingston Ripley Garden
National Mall

Referencing the cultural significance and architectural heritage of its surroundings, this 4.2-acre garden replaced a Victorian one that predated it. Designed in 1987 by chief architect of the Smithsonian Quadrangle, Jean Paul Carlhian, in collaboration with Lester Collins and Sasaki Associates, the rooftop garden unifies the divergent artifacts and collections of the surrounding museums. A central Victorian parterre garden with wide brick walkways, saucer magnolias, and cast iron benches aligns with the Gothic Smithsonian Castle building, which was designed in 1855 by James Renwick. Complementary gardens lie on either side of the parterre, distinctly different in cultural reference and style. The Moongate Garden, inspired by the fifteenth century Temple of Heaven in Beijing, reflects the Sackler Gallery of Art's Asian theme. The Fountain Garden, with its cascading chadar and runnels, is Postmodernist in style but modeled after the fourteenth-century Alhambra and reflective of the Moorish collection in the National Museum of African Art. Two granite pavilions measuring 35 feet high and 90 feet long present the public face of the two museums within the formal garden, which are otherwise located underground. The plant palette, designed by the Director of the Smithsonian's Office of Horticulture James Buckler, includes many mature spring flowering ornamentals, herbaceous borders, and large shade trees. The garden is named for philanthropist and garden patron Enid Haupt, who financed its construction.



Photos by Barrett Doherty



Mary Livingston Ripley Garden

Built in 1978, this half-acre pocket garden was the result of efforts by Mrs. S. Dillon Ripley, wife of the Smithsonian Institution's eighth Secretary. Tucked between the Arts and Industries Building and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, it was designed by architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen in an area previously slated for a parking lot. The original design intent was an accessible sensory garden for visitors to the Smithsonian. Jacobsen's unique, curvilinear design and raised planting beds create a distinct, quiet space amidst the Smithsonian's diverse complex of buildings and gardens. Early plants were brought from the Ripley home in Litchfield, Connecticut. More recent horticultural efforts have focused on displaying a broad variety of plants, many of which are grown in the Smithsonian greenhouses. The nineteenth century cast iron furnishings are part of the historical collection belonging to Smithsonian Gardens. The garden was renamed in Mrs. Ripley's honor in 1988 by the Smithsonian Women's Committee, a philanthropic group she helped create more than twenty years earlier.

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution
Public Park

Landscape Style:
Postmodernist

Designed By:
Hugh Newell Jacobsen

Related Landscapes:
Enid A. Haupt Garden
National Mall



Photos by Barrett Doherty



Lincoln Memorial



Photo by Barrett Doherty

Originating from the 1902 McMillan plan, this memorial anchors the western end of the National Mall on axis with the Washington Monument and U.S. Capitol. Its grounds extended the mall by 2,500 feet, reclaimed swampy Potomac River flats, and established monumental vistas. Henry Bacon and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., are credited with interpreting McMillan’s concept.

The setting comprises the Lincoln Memorial, the memorial circle, the Watergate steps, the Reflecting Pool, and the Elm Walks. The neoclassical Lincoln Memorial National Monument was designed by Bacon and constructed between 1913 and 1922, and houses Daniel Chester French’s monumental marble statue of President Abraham Lincoln. James Greenleaf, who replaced Olmsted, Jr., on the McMillan Commission in 1918, developed the planting plan surrounding the memorial. The Reflecting Pool, opened in 1924, mirrors the sky, the Washington Monument, and the Lincoln Memorial itself, extending the memorial’s formal design and contemplative character. The pool, which runs 2,029 linear feet, is flanked by double allées of Dutch elms planted in the 1930s. In 2012 Sasaki Associates retrofitted the pool to increase its environmental sustainability, redesigned pedestrian circulation, and introduced security walls using granite from the same quarry that supplied the memorial a century earlier.

The Memorial Grounds have played a central role in American civil rights and free speech, as the site of Marian Anderson’s Easter Sunday concert in 1939 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

Landscape Type:
Commemorative Landscape
Public Park -
National Park
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
Henry Bacon
Daniel Chester French
James L. Greenleaf
Charles McKim
McMillan Commission
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Irving Whittier Payne
Sasaki Associates

Related Landscapes:
McMillan Plan
National Mall



Photo by Barrett Doherty



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum



Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

Landscape Type:
Commemorative Landscape
Public Park -
National Park
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Designed By:
Nick Benson
Oehme, van Sweden
ROMA Design Group
Lei Yixin

Related Landscapes:
Tidal Basin
West Potomac Park

In 1999 the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Memorial Foundation held an international design competition for a memorial to commemorate the life of the civil rights activist. In 2000 a design by ROMA Design Group was selected from more than 900 entries. Shortly afterwards, Chinese sculptor Lei Yixin was recruited to join the design team. The Foundation placed the memorial along the shores of the Tidal Basin on axis with the Lincoln Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, creating a visual and symbolic connection between the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Dedicated on August 28, 2011, the 48th anniversary of the "I Have a Dream" speech delivered on the steps of the nearby Lincoln Memorial, the form of the monument was inspired by a line from the speech, "With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope." The primary entrance runs through a narrow gap shouldered by granite slabs sculpted to resemble a mountain split in half. Set slightly off to the side to offer a clear sightline to the distant Thomas Jefferson Memorial through the entrance's narrow portal, a separate slab, representing the "Stone of Hope," features an oversized sculpture of King emerging from a roughly hewn surface. Extending in an arc from the halves of the mountain, stone walls engraved by Nick Benson with a series of quotations from King's writings gradually descend towards the Tidal Basin waterfront, framing the memorial's hardscape plaza before curling outwards towards two subsidiary entries located on West Basin Drive and Independence Avenue. The memorial's landscape architecture firm of record, Oehme, van Sweden (OvS), designed four acres of gardens planted with biomorphic arrangements of crepe myrtles, Princeton elms, winter jasmine, dwarf sweetspire, and daylilies. Nearly 200 cherry trees placed by OvS unite with those along the edge of the surrounding Tidal Basin.



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



National World War II Memorial

Photo by Craig Fildes



This 7.4-acre memorial occupies a central location along the axis of the National Mall. Designed by Friedrich St. Florian with Leo Daly, sculptor Raymond Kaskey, stone carver Nick Benson, and Oehme, van Sweden (OvS), the memorial incorporates elements from the historic Rainbow Pool designed in 1912 by Henry Bacon and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. In 1989 the site was selected for a monument commemorating World War II, due to its position on axis between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. In 1993, President Clinton authorized the creation of the memorial, which opened to the public in 2004.

The site's sunken plaza and pool are accessed via arcing ramps passing beneath two 41-foot-tall arches representing the Atlantic and Pacific fronts, guiding visitors into the space from the north and south. From the east, the plaza is accessed via terraces flanked by 24 bronze bas-relief sculptures depicting war experiences. Adorned with bronze oak and wheat wreaths, 56 granite pillars surround the plaza. Bronze ropes link the columns, symbolizing the unity of U.S. states and territories during the war. The reconfigured Rainbow Pool, sharing the geometry of its predecessor but reduced in size by fifteen percent, is located in the center of the memorial and is animated with fountain jets. From the sunken area, the Freedom Wall to the west of the plaza symbolizes, with gold stars, American lives lost during the war. Flanking the Wall, water from the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool cascades into the plaza via two waterfalls, pooling below the stars. Plantings expand outwards from the perimeter of the memorial, softening its edge and integrating the site into its surrounding park lands. OvS limited the plant palette to white-flowering plants, such as magnolias and azaleas, in the spirit of remembrance.

Historical Name:

Rainbow Pool

Landscape Type:

Commemorative Landscape
Public Park -
National Park
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:

Henry Bacon
Nick Benson
Leo Daly
Raymond Kaskey
Oehme, van Sweden
Wolfgang Oehme
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
James van Sweden
Friedrich St. Florian

Related Landscapes:

National Mall
Tidal Basin



Photos by Roger Foley



Photos by Craig Fildes

Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial

Landscape Type:
Commemorative Landscape
Public Park -
National Park
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:
Postmodernist

Designed By:
AECOM
Nick Benson
Joseph E. Brown
Roger Courtney
EDAW
Sergey Eylanbekov
Frank Gehry
Tomas Osinski

Related Landscapes:
National Mall

Planning for this memorial park began in 1999 when the U.S. Congress created the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission. In 2005 the commission selected a four-acre site at the east end of the National Mall, framed by federal institutions closely linked to the Eisenhower Administration. Architect Frank Gehry with landscape architects Joseph Brown and Roger Courtney of EDAW (now AECOM) won the design competition to design the memorial in 2007. Gehry's initial concept depicted landscapes from Eisenhower's life fabricated on monumental welded steel tapestries supported by 80-foot-tall columns. Pushback from members of the Eisenhower family, government officials, and the public opposing Gehry's selection and design embattled the memorial's development, and many alterations, including the addition of sculptures, and modifications to the number, scale, and placement of tapestries and columns, were made before Gehry's design was finally approved by the Commission of Fine Arts in 2017. The memorial was completed in 2020 at a total cost of \$145 million and dedicated in September of that year. The core of the memorial park features two sculptural scenes from Eisenhower's life as a general and later as president, rendered in limestone and bronze by Sergey Eylanbekov and positioned facing at a slight angle. Inscriptions within the limestone, carved by Nick Benson, feature quotations from presidential speeches. Above these two tableaux, a single steel tapestry by Tomas Osinski measuring 450 feet wide and 60 feet tall features abstract engravings of the cliffs of Normandy. A third sculpture, depicting Eisenhower as a young man, is located at the site's northwest corner. Landscape design by AECOM preserved views of the U.S. Capitol while adding more than 150 trees to screen the view of the tapestry from afar and break up the imposing façade of the Department of Education building behind.



Photos by Alan Karchmer

Pershing Park

An integral part of the long-range plan to renovate Pennsylvania Avenue into the nation's preeminent street, M. Paul Friedberg + Partners was engaged by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation to transform a former traffic island into a multi-level park. The park-plaza hybrid opened in 1981. The plaza, which honors General John J. Pershing, includes many design elements found in Friedberg's earlier work at Minneapolis' Peavey Plaza: a central sunken plaza with a pool basin; amphitheater-style seating oriented around the plaza; and a site-specific palette of furnishings. The design also contains a statue of Pershing. The planting materials were subsequently revised by Oehme, van Sweden. In 2015 Congress authorized the World War I Centennial Commission to construct a World War I Memorial in the park. Following an international design competition that saw 350 submissions, in January 2016 a winning entry by architecture intern Joe Weishaar and figurative sculptor Sabin Howard was selected; it would have substantially altered the earlier Friedberg design (which in July 2016 was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site). Multiple federal reviews saw revisions to the design, which was ultimately unified by landscape architect David Rubin, in part, through the integration of new features, including a circular interpretive belvedere (which replaced a disused pavilion) and a contemplative resting space with a water cascade on the reverse side of "A Soldier's Journey," Howard's 58-foot-long bronze frieze. The overall design intent is a commemorative landscape that is also a vibrant, revived urban oasis. The project opened to the public on April 17, 2021, with the frieze scheduled for installation in 2024.

Landscape Type:
Public Park
Plaza
Commemorative Landscape

Landscape Style:
Modernist
Postmodernist

Designed By:
David Rubin Land Collective
M. Paul Friedberg + Partners
Oehme, van Sweden
Wolfgang Oehme
Pennsylvania Avenue
Development Corporation
James van Sweden
Joe Weishaar

Related Landscapes:
Freedom Plaza
Pennsylvania Avenue



Photos by Alan Karchmer

Washington National Cathedral

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Religious Institution

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Nellie B. Allen
Harold H. Blossom
Florence Brown Bratenahl
Percival Gallagher
Herbert J. Kellaway
Hans J. Koehler
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Artemas Partridge Richardson, II
William Lyman Phillips
Perry Wheeler
Edward Clark Whiting

In 1898, the first bishop of Washington, Henry Yates Satterlee, chose a site overlooking the Federal City for the Washington National Cathedral. Olmsted Brothers landscape architects with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., developed a master plan for the 59-acre site and were involved in its execution from 1907-28. Their plan included internal roadways, locations for institutional buildings, a series of open spaces and gardens, and a Pilgrim's Path through the existing five-acre woodland, now known as Olmsted Woods. Florence Brown Bratenahl, wife of the first Dean of the Cathedral, worked alongside Olmsted, Jr., to implement the plan, especially the planting of the Bishop's Garden, a private garden 'out back' of the Bishop's house. Completed in 1928, the garden included plants of historical interest, and employed biblical references and native plants. Landscape architect Nellie B. Allen also consulted on the Bishop's Garden, contributing her signature 'knot garden' to the plan, though this design has since been altered.

During Olmsted, Jr.'s, thirty-year involvement with the National Cathedral grounds he also served as an adviser or designer on many celebrated Washington, D.C., projects, including the Federal Triangle, the Jefferson Memorial, Roosevelt Island, and Rock Creek Parkway. The last stone for the Cathedral was set in 1990, and the stone-cutting yard was re-shaped into a tree-shaded, open lawn to accentuate the west entrance. Originally envisioned by Olmsted and Bratenahl, an amphitheater was finally added to the Cathedral grounds in 2005, designed by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects with curved stone walls, grass walkways, and plantings of native trees, shrubs, and flowers. The Cathedral was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.



Photo by Lawrence O.P.



Photo by Rebecca Traifon



Photo by Nancy Slade

Tregaron Estate

This twenty-acre Country Place Era house and garden is located on the edge of Rock Creek Park. The land was acquired in the 1880s by Gardiner Greene Hubbard, founder of the National Geographic Society. Hubbard subsequently divided the property between his two daughters, one of whom married Alexander Graham Bell. The Bells never lived there, selling the land to James Parmelee, who named it "The Causeway."

In 1912 Parmelee hired Charles Platt to design a Beaux-Arts house and grounds. The layout of the property follows Platt's typical schema of an entryway (in this case a causeway leading over a large stone bridge) bending toward an arrival court. Platt employed Ellen Shipman to design the gardens and surrounding woodlands. From the back terrace of the house, visitors encounter sweeping views: to the south, a meadow, woodland and a pond and cow pasture beyond; to the east, extensive woodland, traversed by bridle and woodland paths. In the 1930s, Ambassador Joseph Davies and his wife, cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post, bought the estate and renamed it Tregaron. Post's alterations included the addition of a Russian-style dacha in the western formal garden.

The mansion and surrounding nine acres are owned by The Washington International School. In 2006, The Tregaron Conservancy was founded to restore the remaining ten acres and ensure its perpetual preservation. The following year, Heritage Landscapes completed a Cultural Landscape Report for the 21-acre property. The Tregaron Estate was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 as Platt's only surviving house in Washington, D.C., and as one of only three surviving Platt-Shipman collaborations nationally.

Historical Name:
The Causeway

Landscape Type:
Garden and Estate -
Country Place Era Garden
Public Park

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
Heritage Landscapes
Charles Adams Platt
Ellen Shipman



Photos courtesy Tregaron Conservancy



Hillwood Estate, Museum, and Gardens

Historical Name:

Arbremont

This 25-acre estate designed by landscape architect Willard Gebhart overlooks Rock Creek Park in northwest Washington, D.C., and includes a Georgian-style mansion designed by John Deibert in 1926 for Colonel and Mrs. Henry Parsons Erwin.

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate -
Country Place Era Garden
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

In 1955 Marjorie Merriweather Post purchased the property and renamed it Hillwood. The mansion was renovated to house her vast collections of imperial Russian and eighteenth century French decorative art. Thirteen acres of the estate were redesigned for her by a variety of landscape architects. This includes a French Parterre garden by Innocenti & Webel created to complement her collection of French furnishings and decorative arts; a circular rose garden with a curving pergola by Perry Wheeler (who also worked on the garden's Friendship Walk); and a Japanese-influenced pleasure garden later refined by Shogo Myaida. Garden "rooms," defined by hedges or large plantings, include a putting green, greenhouses (with a dedicated orchid curator), cutting garden, lunar lawn, and vista terrace, in addition to twelve acres of woodland.

Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:

John Deibert
Willard Gebhart
Innocenti & Webel
Shogo J. Myaida
Richard K. Webel
Perry Wheeler



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

American University

Photo courtesy Henry Paul Davis - American University



Incorporated by the District of Columbia in 1891 and chartered by the U.S. Congress two years later, this university opened as a co-educational institution in 1914. The initial 90-acre campus was laid out on the former grounds of Fort Gaines by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., between 1891 and 1896, working with the architectural firm Van Brunt & Howe. However, Olmsted's plans were left incomplete due to financial constraints, and much of his design was lost to subsequent development in the late twentieth century. Located at the junction of three residential developments in northwest Washington, D.C., the university spreads over some 84 acres between two contiguous campuses split east to west by Nebraska Avenue. On the Main Campus, remnants of Olmsted's and Van Brunt & Howe's original L-shaped plan can still be seen in the Eric Friedman Quadrangle, a linear mall since bookended by the circular Kay Spiritual Life Center and the Bender Library. The university expanded substantially after World War II, with some nineteen buildings designed by architect Avery Faulkner. During this time landscape architect Lester Collins consulted on the new additions. Various open-air features are nestled throughout the grounds, including the Woods Brown Amphitheatre (1954), shaded by large tulip poplars, dogwood and magnolia trees. Beginning in 1996, the university launched a landscape improvements initiative that transformed the campus into an arboretum by 2003. Led by campus landscape architects H. Paul Davis and Mike Mastrota, the initiative also added gardens (Katzen Sculpture Garden in 2005 and Ann's Garden in 2017), bioretention swales throughout the grounds, and over a dozen green roofs. The campus features more than 500 different woody plants and more than 4,000 trees. Formerly part of the Gilbert Grosvenor estate, the eight-acre East Campus was transformed from a parking lot into a residential and academic complex by Stantec and Wiles Mensch Corporation in 2016.

Landscape Type:
Campus -
Quadrangle Plan

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Lester Albertson Collins
H. Paul Davis
Avery Faulkner
Mike Mastrota
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
Van Brunt & Howe



Photos courtesy Henry Paul Davis - American University



Dumbarton Oaks

Landscape Type:
Garden and Estate -
Country Place Era Garden
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:
Arts & Crafts

Designed By:
Beatrice Farrand
Ruth Mildred Havey
Heritage Landscapes
Alden Hopkins
Diane Kostial McGuire
Alice Orme Smith
Robert Zion

Related Landscapes:
Dumbarton Oaks Park

A quintessential example of a Country Place Era garden, Dumbarton Oaks was designed by Beatrice Farrand in close collaboration with owners Mildred Barnes Bliss and Robert Woods Bliss.

A series of terraced gardens connected by paths and stairways layer into a deciduous woodland on the edge of Georgetown. Farrand was hired in 1921, shortly after the Blisses acquired the 53-acre property. She developed a cohesive plan for the gardens as a series of rooms with strong architecture, elegant sculptural detail, and a sophisticated and complex horticultural plan. The garden was implemented over more than 30 years, integrating traditional estate elements, such as a swimming pool, tennis court, and kitchen gardens. With English and Italian elements, such as the Lovers' Lane Pool, the garden is uniquely American.

In 1940 the Blisses gave the upper sixteen acres to Harvard University for use as a center for Byzantine, pre-Columbian, and garden and landscape studies, while the lower 27 acres were given to the federal government as a public park. Farrand, in 1941, anticipating changes, wrote the Plant Book to direct future renovation and maintenance of the gardens. Farrand's design was refined after her death in 1959 by former associate Ruth Havey at the Pebble Garden and consulting landscape architect Alden Hopkins at the Ellipse.



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photos by M.V. Jantzen

Dumbarton Oaks Park

This 27-acre woodland garden was originally designed as the naturalistic component of the Dumbarton Oaks estate. As part of the collaboration between landscape gardener Beatrice Farrand and philanthropists and collectors Mildred and Robert Bliss, the park was conceived as a series of paths and meadows organized around a small, unnamed tributary of Rock Creek. The larger 53-acre garden complex was crafted, Bliss wrote, to offer the "illusion of country life," and the park with its naturalized expanses of wildflowers, bulbs, and woodland shrubs, both native and exotic, was the culmination of that effect. Built elements include two arbors, multiple benches and footbridges, two pump houses, and eighteen waterfall dams, all in the rustic Arts & Crafts style. The woodland garden was designed both as the ultimate destination within the Dumbarton Oaks estate and as a "wild" complement to the formal terraced gardens above the stream valley. Dumbarton Oaks Park was given to the federal government in 1940 to be managed by the National Park Service. In 2010 the Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy was founded to work in concert with NPS to restore the landscape to its former splendor. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
National Park

Landscape Style:
Picturesque
Arts & Crafts

Designed By:
Beatrice Farrand

Related Landscapes:
Dumbarton Oaks
Rock Creek Park



Photos by Allen Russ



C&O Canal National Historical Park

Landscape Type:

Public Park -
National Park

Landscape Style:

Naturalistic or Cohesive

Designed By:

Civilian Conservation Corps
Charles Fisk
George Washington
Benjamin Wright

In 1785 George Washington founded the Potowmack Company to make the Potomac River more navigable for trade and westward expansion. The company was divested to the Chesapeake and Ohio Company in 1824, and construction began on an extended commercial waterway on the river's northern shore. Completed in 1850 with a span of 184.5 miles from Washington, D.C., to Cumberland, Maryland, the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal was constructed under Chief Engineer Benjamin Wright and his successor Charles Fisk. A testament to the technological prowess of the period, the canal system comprised 74 lift locks, seven dams, masonry aqueducts, weirs, and 200 culverts, as well as lockhouses, gates, bridges and a 3,000-foot-long tunnel. After years of declining use due to competition from the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, severe flooding in 1924 closed the canal's operations. In 1938 the federal government purchased the right-of-way and worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps to transform the former industrial landscape into a recreational greenway. Later, a proposal to turn portions of the canal into a scenic parkway met with public opposition which can be traced back to the 1940s. The efforts against the thruway peaked in 1954 with a highly publicized effort led by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. Today the national park is defined by native woodlands and rugged rock outcroppings and 22 miles of canal complete with flowing water and operable locks. The former towpath has been adapted as a popular gravel walk for hikers and joggers. In 2007 the nonprofit C&O Canal Trust was founded to increase public engagement with the site's historic, natural, and recreational resources. Beginning in 2017 the National Park Service, in partnership with Georgetown Heritage, restored locks 3 and 4, towpaths, and canal walls. In 1961 the canal was named a National Monument and in 1971 designated a National Historical Park.



Photos by Amanda Shull



Tudor Place

In 1805, Martha Washington's granddaughter, Martha Custis Peter, and her husband, Thomas Peter, a successful tobacco merchant, established this estate on the hills above the port of Georgetown. Its remaining 5.5 acres of gardens combine formal, naturalistic and Gardenesque design elements, and are the cumulative work of the Peter family, who occupied the estate for six generations, preserving and altering the grounds as Georgetown and the Federal City grew around them. Dr. William Thornton, the first architect of the U.S. Capitol, designed the neoclassical mansion at the center of the property. Shade trees, including a large tulip poplar, frame the South Lawn, which slopes upward to meet the circular portico. The northern grounds encompass several distinct garden spaces. The informality of the pastoral Bowling Green contrasts with the geometric clarity of the Boxwood Ellipse, the brick-edged Lily Pond, and the English Knot Garden, the last ornamented with heirloom roses. In the northeast corner of the property, the Tennis Court Garden lies secluded behind a screen of white pine trees and shrubs and is framed by 200-year-old white oaks. The site also contains a number of historical outbuildings, including a smoke house, garage, and a Japanese Tea House. A Cultural Landscape Report was completed for the property in 2012 by Heritage Landscapes. Tudor Place was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate -
Colonial Garden
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:

Colonial Revival

Designed By:

Heritage Landscapes
Armistead Peter
William Thornton



Photo by Dena Kennett



Photos by Courtney Spearman



The Wharf

Landscape Type:
Waterfront Development

Landscape Style:
Postmodernist

Designed By:
Clinton + Ries
Landscape Architecture Bureau
Lee and Associates
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates
Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects
Paul Josey
Perkins Eastman
Wolf Josey

Related Landscapes:
Banneker Park –
Tenth Street Overlook

This mile-long development along the Potomac River was formerly an industrial zone populated by warehouses and boat storage, with maritime use dating to the Civil War era. The Municipal Fish Market, open here since 1805, is the oldest continually operating fish market in the United States. After harbor activity dwindled in the late twentieth century, District officials created the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation in 2003 to lead the area's redevelopment with the goal of improving pedestrian connections to the city's southwest waterfront and generating commercial and residential investment.

By 2008 a team of developers had purchased most of the waterfront land. Perkins Eastman was hired to develop a master plan and lead a team of more than a dozen architects, landscape architects, and planners to design the project. Phase I, completed in 2018, developed a pedestrian promenade stretching two-thirds of a mile. The design team constructed a reinforced seawall topped by a riverfront esplanade terminating in a three-acre neighborhood park and recreation pier. The promenade proceeds along a vibrant mixed-use development with restaurants and shops at the ground level on one side, opposite two rows of riparian Colombia plane trees framing a waterfront walkway and providing shade for benches. Belgian block cobblestones pave the commercial-facing pedestrian areas while smooth granite pavers delineate the waterfront space. Phase 2, begun in 2017 and scheduled for completion in 2022, extends the amenity-lined promenade and will also include a marina and new one-and-a-half-acre park.

Photo by Ted Eytan



Photos by Ted Eytan

Capitol Park Towers

Landscape Type:
Waterfront Development

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
District of Columbia Redevelopment
Land Agency
Daniel Urban Kiley
Office of Dan Kiley
Lee and Associates
Leo Lionni
Cloethiel Woodard Smith

Related Landscapes:
Harbour Square

The collaborative work of architect Cloethiel Woodard Smith and landscape architect Dan Kiley, Capitol Park was the first residential urban renewal project sponsored by the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA), formed to redevelop a largely dilapidated 522-acre area in southwest Washington, D.C. Bounded by the Southwest Expressway, 4th Street, I Street, and Delaware Avenue SW, Capitol Park set the tone for other urban renewal developments in the community.

Kiley and Smith designed the community of townhouses and twelve-story apartment buildings to emphasize urban living in natural surroundings, utilizing open green space, covered pergolas, a pool, and common pathways to create a park-like setting. At the core of the complex, Capitol Park featured a pavilion sculpted with a curved concrete roof on steel columns. A path of brick steps leads to a free-standing wall with a large tile mosaic by the graphic artist Leo Lionni, who illustrated the book *Frederick the Mouse* and influenced M. Paul Friedberg's work. The original H Street SW is a pedestrian corridor that runs through the entire site, linking the intimate courtyards of the townhouses with less formal central open spaces. Changes in ownership have occurred over the years, and in the mid-2000s the pavilion and pool were demolished. Capitol Park is listed on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites (2003).



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Harbour Square

Landscape Type:
Waterfront Development

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
District of Columbia Redevelopment
Land Agency
Daniel Urban Kiley
Office of Dan Kiley
Cloethiel Woodard Smith

Related Landscapes:
Capitol Park Towers

A joint project by architect Cloethiel Woodward Smith and landscape architect Dan Kiley, this residential complex was developed between 1963 and 1966, the fourth superblock completed as part of the Southwest Washington Redevelopment Plan led by the District of Columbia's Redevelopment Land Agency. Incorporating some of the District's earliest rowhouses, including those on Wheat Row (1793), the development antedated the National Historic Preservation Act and was one of the city's first adaptive reuse projects.

Facing Waterfront Park (designed by Hideo Sasaki in 1972), the complex consists of three high-rise apartment buildings and sixteen rowhouses arranged in a series of quadrangles. Enclosed on three sides by high-rise towers, a central courtyard garden planted with a grid of maple trees is edged by a wide, elevated walkway to its west. The walkway, topped by a pergola, separates the courtyard from a one-acre aquatic garden, one of several garden spaces designed by Kiley and strategically positioned throughout the development. The aquatic garden includes jet fountains, water lilies, a geometric island planted with a willow tree, and a series of platforms that traverse the reflecting pool connecting to an allée of dogwoods. Facing the Washington Channel, the garden reflects the sky and creates a similar visual experience for residents at various stories. Other distinct gardens include a sunken English garden with a round basin, planted with sugar maple trees, and a well-shaded garden with a linear pool and private pathway to the waterfront. The exterior façade is dotted with large balcony planters, and roof terraces and a rooftop community garden look down over the aquatic garden and its adjacent sunbathing lawn. The rowhouses were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, and Harbour Square was added in 2018.



Photos by Aileen Berringer

Watergate

Landscape Type:
Waterfront Development
Roof Garden

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Luigi Morretti
Boris Timchenko

Located on Rock Creek Parkway with sweeping views of the Potomac, this ten-acre site is named for its proximity to the C&O Canal zero-mile marker. Designed by architect Luigi Morretti and constructed between 1964 and 1971, this early example of mixed-use development comprises six interconnected buildings accommodating residential, office, hotel, and shopping functions. Landscape architect Boris Timchenko developed the triangular site, built atop a parking garage providing views from both ground level and the cantilevered balconies above. With only three acres occupied by buildings, Timchenko developed the remainder with a park-like setting of pools, fountains, flowers, and open courtyards.

With both curvilinear and angular footprints, the configuration of the buildings defines four distinct areas ranging from public, semi-public, and private zones. A strip of lawn punctuated by mature trees creates the transition from Rock Creek Parkway to the Watergate complex, encircled by a retaining wall. The primary public access to the campus is the elongated residential structure at the intersection of Virginia and New Hampshire Avenues. With loggia and cantilevered balconies, this curving structure embraces a boomerang-shaped courtyard housing two linked fountains and providing access to the shopping mall. The angular construction of the hotel and office complex form the northwest perimeter of the courtyard, which contains a terraced lawn, trees, flowering shrubs, and a pool. Open to the Potomac, two adjoined semi-circular residential structures enclose another courtyard and a pool. Mature trees are clustered into 150 planters built atop columns extending into the subterranean parking area. Watergate was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.



Photos courtesy Winston Real Estate - Gigi Winston



Photo by Carol Truppi

Photo by Andrew Bossi



Theodore Roosevelt Island National Memorial



Photo by Ted Booth

Dedicated to the legacy of America's 26th President, the Theodore Roosevelt Island National Memorial is a 91-acre wooded island, located in the Potomac River between Arlington Memorial Bridge and Key Bridge. A natural geological feature (in contrast with the highly planned city of Washington, D.C.) the island has been used by Native Americans as a fishing village, granted to Lord Baltimore by King Charles I, owned by a Caribbean sea captain, inhabited by the Mason family (who built a brick mansion and cultivated extensive gardens), protected by Union troops during the Civil War, and enjoyed as a picnic venue. In 1932, The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association purchased the island to create a memorial to the American political leader and renowned conservationist. The island was re-naturalized into mature woodland through the efforts of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Architect Eric Gugler sited the memorial at the island's northern end. He designed an oval space with upper and lower terraces planted densely with boxwood and surrounded by a moat and a double hedge of willow oaks. The grove-like quality lends a spirit of solitude and contemplation to the formal memorial. A seventeen-foot-tall bronze statue of the former president designed by sculptor Paul Manship is prominently featured as the memorial's centerpiece, while four 21-foot-tall granite stelae are inscribed with quotations expressing Roosevelt's philosophy on manhood, youth, nature, and the nation.

This wildlife sanctuary serves as a living memorial to Roosevelt's leadership in land and resource conservation. Managed by the National Park Service, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 and dedicated in 1967.

Historical Name:

Analostan
My Lord's Island
Barbadoes
Mason's Island

Landscape Type:

Commemorative Landscape
Public Park -
National Park

Designed By:

Civilian Conservation Corps
Eric Gugler
Henry Vincent Hubbard
Paul Manship
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Edward Clark Whiting
Leon Henry Zach

Related Landscapes:

George Washington Memorial
Parkway



Photos by Ted Booth



Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution
Roof Garden

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Mecanoo
Oehme, van Sweden
OTJ Architects
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

In 2015 Oehme, van Sweden (OvS) was selected to redesign the rooftop for the Modernist library originally designed in 1972 by architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Spanning more than 26,000 square feet, two vast green roofs, one of which sits on a raised deck atop the main roof of the library, feature draught-tolerant perennials as part of an extensive stormwater filtration system. The plantings also serve to mitigate the urban heat island effect, while both softening sightlines to the surrounding taller office buildings and simultaneously affording garden views for their inhabitants. Directly below is the publicly accessible 17,250-square-foot fifth floor terrace, with its array of irregularly-shaped raised planting beds and integral wood slat benches, strategically placed throughout the paved roof deck. The planters are grouped into miniature gardens, such as the Native Pollinator Garden, Garden of the Senses, and Seasonal Viewing Garden.

To engage with the sidewalk at ground level, street trees in oversized planters, sited among large granite pavers that recall the materiality of the roof deck above, merge the library's landscape with the broader urban context and draw library goers into the site. During the course of the project, architects Mecanoo and OTJ Architects removed a parking garage at the rear of the building, enabling OvS to extend an existing terrace to include ample cafe seating with movable chairs surrounded by shade trees. This flagship branch of the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) reopened to the public in September 2020. The structure was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.



Photos by Oehme, van Sweden



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Robert Benson Photography



Black Lives Matter Plaza



Photo by John Brighenti

Following the deaths of George Floyd in Minnesota and Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, nationwide protests against police brutality took place across the United States in the summer of 2020. After weeks of peaceful protests through the streets of Washington, D.C., on June 1, 2020, federal forces cleared protests from 16th Street NW near Lafayette Park using tear gas and violence. Four days later, Washington, D.C.'s Department of Public Works and Department of Transportation, MuralsDC, and a crew of local artists worked overnight to create a commemorative, permanent streetscape mural spelling "Black Lives Matter" in the asphalt roadbed of two blocks of 16th Street NW running from K Street to H Street terminating in Lafayette Square.

Reading from north to south, the 48-foot-tall capital letters are painted in bright yellow and run from curb-to-curb. The text is followed by an image of the flag of Washington, D.C., two horizontal bars topped by three stars. On June 5th, 2020, Mayor Muriel Bowser updated the street signage to officially designate this two-block area as Black Lives Matter Plaza. The plaza was open only to pedestrians until 2021, when the city constructed two single traffic lanes on either side of a 14-foot-wide pedestrian pathway traversing the center of the mural.

Landscape Type:
Commemorative Landscape Plaza

Designed By:
DC Public Works Department
MuralsDC

Related Landscapes:
Lafayette Park



Photo by Diego Sideburns



Photos by Ted Eylan



Howard University

Landscape Type:
Campus -
Quadrangle Plan

Landscape Style:
Colonial Revival

Designed By:
John Edmonston Brent
Albert Cassell
Louis Fry, Jr.
David Augustus Williston

Starting with a single building in 1867, this HBCU (Historically Black College and University) has since grown to comprise some 258 acres and over 115 buildings. Edged by McMillan Reservoir on the east, the hilltop site was chosen for its panoramic views of the surrounding city. The campus' major expansion following World War I was the product of a collaboration between landscape architect and horticulturalist David Williston and architect Albert Cassell. Williston created many campuses for historically black colleges, including Tuskegee University, and was the first African American landscape architect in private practice. Cassell is credited with producing the campus master plan and overseeing the design of many buildings constructed during the interwar period, including Frederick Douglass Hall and Founder's Library, both National Historic Landmarks, designated in 2001. The Main Quadrangle (or "The Yard"), one of the campus' oldest features, was redesigned in 1930 with precise cross-paths and tree placements. The hillside east of the Main Quadrangle is terraced, with stairs leading down to the Lower Quadrangle, and together the two spaces are set off from the rest of the campus by a brick and wrought iron fence with entrance gates designed by architect Louis Fry, Jr. The Yard and adjacent buildings were listed in the National Register of Historic Places and were simultaneously designated a National Historic Landmark District in 2001.



Photos by Nikolaus Fogle



Photos by Nikolaus Fogle



Photo by Nikolaus Fogle



Gallaudet University

Historical Name:
National Deaf-Mute College
Gallaudet College

Landscape Type:
Campus -
Quadrangle Plan

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Dangermond Keane Architects
Hall McKnight
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
Olmsted, Vaux & Co.
Stantec
Studio Twenty Seven Architecture
Calvert Vaux
Frederick Clarke Withers

Founded in 1864 as the National Deaf-Mute College, this institution emerged from the Columbia Institution of the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind. The campus was laid out by the landscape architecture firm Olmsted, Vaux & Co. beginning in 1866. Initial buildings were designed by Frederick Withers, partner in Calvert Vaux's architectural firm Vaux, Withers & Co. The institution's name was changed to Gallaudet College in 1917, and to Gallaudet University in 1986. Situated in northeast Washington, D.C., the university was initially surrounded by farmland and has since been hemmed in by gridded urban and industrial development, with a rail depot located directly north. Olmsted and Vaux's plan called for dense border plantings and a meandering circulation network designed to provide choreographed passages of scenery. As suggested by the firm, the southwest corner of the campus was purchased to house faculty residences separated from academic buildings by an open field, today known as Olmsted Green. Early buildings include the flagship Chapel Hall (1871) prominently overlooking the main entrance on Florida Avenue, the President's House (1869), and College Hall (1878), all by Withers.

Over the twentieth century, the campus expanded north, with substantial growth in the 1960s and 1970s. The Modernist Hanson Plaza, built in 1975, was updated in the 2010s by Studio Twenty Seven. In 2016 the University commissioned U.K.-based architectural firm Hall McKnight to transform the campus' western border, better integrating the school with its surrounding neighborhood. In 2018 Dangermond Keane Architects, in partnership with Stantec, produced a master plan to guide future development. Today the campus measures 99 acres, with the original fourteen-acre core listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1974.



Photo courtesy BeyondDC



Photo by Mel



Photo by Ron Cogswell

Alethia Tanner Park

Historically a rail yard, this 2.5-acre site was conceived as a park in 2012 by Washington, D.C.'s NoMa Business Improvement District (BID) as part of a broad effort to increase public green space within this dense, formerly industrial area. With a grant from the city, the BID purchased the lot in 2013. The NoMa Parks Foundation led the development and engaged landscape architects Nelson Byrd Woltz to design the park, which was completed in 2019.

Sited just off the Metropolitan Branch Trail, a rail-to-trail network spanning 5.5 miles through Washington, D.C., and Maryland, and with close access to public transportation, the park is easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and commuters. A large, open lawn is surrounded by more active zones, including an enclosed playground, a dog park, and pedestrian connections to the Metropolitan Branch Trail. The site's industrial history required remediation of site soils, a process that included removing and replacing soil as well as implementing phytoremediation of soils. A meadow planted with Indian mustard aids in the remediation of the soil's metal contaminants, while native soft rush and butterfly weed planted alongside improve bioretention and rehabilitate the site's insect ecosystem. The park's name was selected by public vote and honors a formerly enslaved educator, advocate, and entrepreneur in Washington, D.C. Alethia Tanner Park was dedicated on June 25, 2020.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Vest Pocket Park

Designed By:
Nelson Byrd Woltz
Studio Twenty Seven Architecture

Related Landscapes:
Metropolitan Branch Trail



Photo by Elvert Barnes



Photo by BeyondDC



Photo by James E. Russell

Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land Garden



Photo by Amanda Shull

Surrounding the Memorial Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the grounds of this monastery in northeast Washington contain replicas of famous Holy Land shrines for pilgrims of all faiths. The church, designed by Roman architect Aristide Leonori and built in 1898-99, is Byzantine in style with a late Romanesque monastery behind it. The grounds, which originally included a small farm, consist of formal and Picturesque gardens.

Framing the upper, more formal garden, is the Rosary Portico designed by John Joseph Earley, an innovator in decorative concrete whose work can also be seen at Meridian Hill Park. Reminiscent of St. John the Lateran's cloister in Rome, the portico holds some fifteen chapels commemorating the lives of Jesus and Mary in colorful mosaics, and acts as both a border and entrance gate for the churchyard. Formal plantings of boxwood and masses of roses line the walks, palm and banana trees dot the lawns, and brightly-colored annuals surround memorial statuary. The lower gardens are less formal and highlight fourteen Stations of the Cross. Winding paths with woodland plantings of azaleas, ferns, and hellebores reveal grottoes, chapels, replicas of tombs, and spaces for devotion. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

Historical Name:
Mount Saint Sepulchre

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Religious Institution

Landscape Style:
Italianate
Picturesque

Designed By:
Aristide Leonori
John Joseph Earley



Photo by Amanda Shull



Photo by Curt Millay



Photo by Jennifer Andrews

National Arboretum

Landscape Type:
Arboretum

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Civilian Conservation Corps
Deigert and Yerkes
EDAW
Masao Kinoshita
Albert G. Mumma, Jr.
Oehme, van Sweden
Wolfgang Oehme
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Russell Page
Reed Hilderband Landscape Architects
Sasaki Associates
James van Sweden
Perry Wheeler

Developed as part of a larger plan to create parkland along the Anacostia River, the hilly, 189-acre site was established as a federally funded research facility and arboretum by an act of Congress in 1927. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was involved in the initial plans and the arboretum's early site work was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The Public Buildings Administration established building locations, the layout for trails, and nine miles of roads in 1948. The arboretum opened in 1959.

Now 446 acres, the arboretum's development has followed the original 1948 plan, a 1978 master plan by Sasaki Associates, and several strategic plans. The main building is a Modernist administration-laboratory designed by Albert Mumma, Jr., of Deigert and Yerkes, with thematic gardens showcasing some of the significant plant introductions developed by Arboretum scientists.

Major exhibits include distinct collections of azaleas, dogwoods, perennials, herbs, hollies, and magnolias; the Fern Valley Native Plant Collection; the Flowering Tree Collection and Walk; and the Gotelli Dwarf and Slow Growing Conifer Garden. The Asian Collection, originally funded by The Garden Club of America, was designed by Perry Wheeler in 1963, with the later addition of the Japanese Stroll Garden and Bonsai Pavilion designed by Masao Kinoshita of Sasaki Associates. The Friendship Garden, created by Oehme, van Sweden; the National Capitol Columns, sited by Russell Page and installed by EDAW; and the National Grove of State Trees are also significant features. The National Arboretum was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



Photos by Courtney Spearman



Photo by Barrett Doherty

Photo by Barrett Doherty



Langston Terrace Dwellings



Photo by Payton Chung

This 13.7-acre residential development in northeast Washington, D.C., located between H Street, Benning Road, 21st and 24th Streets, is a remarkable example of a Modernist, International style residential complex designed and built by African Americans. It was conceived to not only provide safe and sanitary housing for the working class and the poor but aspired to uplift the spirits of its residents and encourage their upward mobility. Constructed between 1935 and 1938 with funding from the Public Works Administration Housing Program, it was the first such development in the nation's capital and the second in the United States. The buildings were designed by Hilyard Robinson and Paul Revere Williams, of the firm Robinson, Porter and Williams, two celebrated African American architects who had studied abroad; the landscape was designed by David Williston, one of the nation's first African American landscape architects.

The rectangular site is organized around a central green with buildings containing two to four stories following the terraced topography. The terraced site provided an opportunity to arrange the different building heights for optimal views inward and outward to the central green space, situated at the highest point looking out over the complex. A children's playground contains five reinforced cast concrete cubist animal structures, designed by sculptor Lenore Thomas and added in 1941, for climbing and playing. Approximately twenty percent of the site contains buildings, with the remaining land dedicated to communal green space and walkways. The main entrance, an underpass, decorated with a sculptured frieze by Daniel Olney, entitled the *Progress of the Negro Race*, is characteristic of "social realist" 1930s Works Progress Administration art. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

Landscape Type:
Suburb -
FHA-Approved Neighborhood

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Public Works Administration
Robinson, Porter and Williams
Hilyard Robinson
Paul Revere Williams
David Augustus Williston



Photos by Miles Glendinning, courtesy University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art



Fort Lincoln Park

Historical Name:
Fort Lincoln Commemorative Park

Landscape Type:
Playground -
Imaginative/Adventure Playground
Public Park -
Neighborhood Park

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Lee and Associates
M. Paul Friedberg and Associates
M. Paul Friedberg

Located high on a ridge overlooking Washington, D.C., from the northeast, this park was designed as the active recreational component of the Fort Lincoln New Town residential community. Conceived under the Johnson administration as part of a 1969 plan to offer housing and amenities for a racially and economically balanced community, the neighborhood development was never completed. The six-acre park occupies one of 68 former Civil War ramparts, now known as the Fort Circle Parks, and was designed by M. Paul Friedberg and Associates to interpret the site's military history and its elevated position. Five open-air pavilions, with clusters of honey locusts growing through the wood-latticed structures, provide extensive views of the surrounding area from atop the historic earthworks. The center of the park sits lower than the perimeter earthworks, with a mix of small berms, lawn, rubberized turf, and paved areas for different types of play. Shaded benches face a brick climbing pyramid with a moat. Built into the grade, another play area references the historic battlements and has varied scales for climbing, sliding, and scrambling. Permanent seating and tables designed for board games are situated on the perimeter, near a concrete stair-step amphitheater that connects to a school. The park's many levels are all connected by ramps.

Following the 2020 demolition of the Thurgood Marshall School, the park's rehabilitation efforts led by Lee and Associates include the construction of a new recreation and childhood center (by Studios Architecture), which helps to unify the 27-acre campus.



Photos by Barrett Doherty

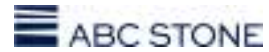
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