



What's Out There.®

St. Louis & the Missouri River Valley



The Cultural Landscape Foundation
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Welcome to *What's Out There*[®] *St. Louis & the Missouri River Valley*, organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF).

This guidebook provides photographs and information about 37 examples of the region's rich cultural landscape legacy, many of which were featured in *What's Out There Weekend St. Louis & the Missouri River Valley*, September 24-25, 2022, a weekend of free, expert-led tours. Originally inhabited by the Native Peoples of the Illini Confederacy, the region became occupied by Europeans in the mid-eighteenth century. With a land grant from King Louis XV of France, Pierre Laclède and his thirteen-year-old charge, Auguste Chouteau, established the site at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers as a trading post, directing the development of the village's first grid of streets. The colony of St. Louis was ceded to the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase. One year later, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark departed from St. Louis to begin their Louisiana Purchase Expedition, ordaining St. Louis as the "gateway to the West." St. Louis avoided seeing battle during the Civil War and after the war's conclusion experienced rapid growth. European immigrants including Henry Shaw, Julius Pitzman, Maximilian Kern, and George Kessler brought continental ideas on urban planning to the American West, enriching St. Louis with public parks and private landscapes of monumental grandeur. When the city hosted the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904, its frontier idealism and ambitious public spaces were showcased to the world. In the twentieth century St. Louis' population peaked, fueled by the Great Migration of African Americans from the Southern United States. Segregation and suburban exodus fractured the city but also inspired community-led movements that continue to shape its development.

The iconic arch and surrounding park, which were designed by Eero Saarinen and Dan Kiley and opened in 1965, awakened the city's neglected downtown and boldly proclaimed its place in American history. Continuing through the present day, the parks, gardens, campuses, plazas, and surrounding countryside landscapes of St. Louis and the Missouri River Valley reflect cultural and civic histories and offer residents and visitors alike world-class public spaces and amenities.

This guidebook is a complement to TCLF's digital *What's Out There Cultural Landscapes Guide to St. Louis & the Missouri River Valley*, an interactive online platform that includes a history of the city and more than 50 site profiles, as well as overarching narratives, maps, historic photographs, and biographies. 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 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 Dan Burkhardt of Magnificent Missouri and Mary Morgan, along with Esley Hamilton, whose collective knowledge, insight, and tenacity were instrumental and irreplaceable in making this exceptional weekend of tours possible. 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 St. Louis & the Missouri River Valley* 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



Katy Trail, p. 48 - Photo by Dennis Coello



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 is also home to the Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize[®].

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Cahokia Mounds

Photo by Barrett Doherty



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Forest Park

Landscape Type:

Public Park -
Large Municipal Park

Landscape Style:

Picturesque

Designed By:

Arbolope Studio
William C. E. Becker
Cass Gilbert
H3 Studio
HOK
Kelly/Varnell
Maximilian G. Kern
George E. Kessler
Darrel Morrison
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Julius Pitzman
Planning Design Studio
Henry Wright
SWT Design
Austin Tao

Related Landscapes:

Jewel Box
Exposition Grounds
River des Peres

Established in 1876, this 1,293-acre park is one of the country’s largest urban parks. Originally surrounded by farmland and a 40-minute carriage ride from downtown, today it is in the heart of the city. The initial plan was by park superintendent Maximilian Kern in conjunction with engineer Julius Pitzman. It became the site of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (the 1904 World’s Fair) with myriad exhibition palaces including the Palace of Fine Arts by Cass Gilbert (today the St. Louis Art Museum). After the fair, the space reverted to parkland under the guidance of landscape architect George Kessler.

In 1986, after years of deferred maintenance, Forest Park Forever (FPF) was founded to manage the park in partnership with the St. Louis Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. That same year, “Forest Park,” a 304-page history of the park, was published by FPF with the Junior League of St. Louis. In the next decade, donations funded: repairs to the Victorian Bridge, bandstand, and statuary; renewal of park furnishings; and the planting of hundreds of trees. Landscape architects Bruce Kelly and David Varnell created a master plan in 1989, informing park circulation and use. Miles of walking and biking trails now circulate through the park providing connectivity to cultural institutions including the St. Louis Zoo, Science Center, and Munny Opera.

An updated master plan implemented in 2004 addressed both ecological and historic resources, without sacrificing open space. Project work by Oehme, van Sweden & Associates, H3 Studio, and SWT Design included rehabilitating Pagoda Circle and daylighting the once-buried River des Peres waterway. Park conservation efforts included the stewardship of a 194-acre nature reserve spanning the length of the park, which contains old growth forests, savannas, wetlands, and restored woodlands, prairies, and waterways. The Jewel Box, a New Deal-era Art Deco conservatory, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000 and renovated in 2002.

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Ted Engler



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum



Forest Park - Jewel Box

Landscape Type:
Botanical Garden

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
William C. E. Becker
John Moritz
SWT Design

Related Landscapes:
Forest Park

Located at the intersection of Wells and McKinley Drives within the 1,293-acre Forest Park, this Art Deco greenhouse was designed by engineer William Becker and completed in 1936 with assistance from the Public Works Administration. Public floral conservatories gained popularity in the city in the 1910s, when pollution and smog threatened much of the city's flora. City gardener John Moritz was tasked with exhibiting pollution-resistant plants in greenhouse displays for public enjoyment. The first such greenhouse, nicknamed the Jewel Box, proved wildly popular and inspired more elaborate seasonal exhibits throughout the 1920s. In 1933, Mayor Bernard Dickmann allocated \$75,000 to erect a larger, permanent greenhouse. Becker, then St. Louis' chief engineer, studied climate patterns to produce a design measuring 144 feet long and 55 feet wide, with more than 4,000 glass wall panes set into wood and iron supports, and five stepped levels of wood roofing with glass clerestories. The design also includes three reflecting pools south of the structure, along with a network of footpaths connecting the greenhouse to the park's existing pedestrian routes. Inside, the space accommodates rotating floral exhibits. The structure, officially designated as the Jewel Box, opened in 1936. Seasonal displays (e.g. chrysanthemums, lilies, azalea) continue to attract visitors. Following city budget cuts in the 1990s, local volunteer groups formed partnerships with the city department of parks and recreation to maintain the landscape setting surrounding the Jewel Box, including the lily ponds within the reflecting pools and beds lining the pedestrian paths. A \$3.5 million renovation of the structure was completed in 2002, with SWT Design landscape architects. The Jewel Box was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photos by Greg Barth -
Courtesy Oehme, van Sweden

Forest Park - River des Peres

The River des Peres (River of the Fathers) that meandered through the northern and eastern sections of Forest Park was one of its most important features. Landscape gardener Maximillian Kern transformed the river's floodplains and lagoons into a series of interconnected lakes. Unfortunately, these transformations—exacerbated by the flow of the metropolitan sewer system into the river—resulted in a fetid swamp. When Forest Park was chosen as the site of the 1904 World's Fair, the river was considered an unhealthy and unattractive liability and was diverted and buried. Following a flood in 1915, the City of St. Louis completed burying the river's eighteen-mile-long stretch, and, by the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration had accomplished the goal.

In 1993 renewed investment in Forest Park led to a master plan for its redevelopment. Because the river could not be unearthed, engineers and hydrologists worked with landscape architects Oehme, van Sweden & Associates, John Hoal, Darrel Morrison, and Austin Tao on a project to mimic the historic riparian system above ground. Originating in the park's northwest corner, the waterway flows east, gaining momentum with inputs from Post-Dispatch Lake and the Grand Basin, and receiving recirculated water from Deer Lake and the Steinberg Skating Rink, before emptying into Jefferson Lake. Volunteers with the Flora Conservancy of Forest Park planted nearly 28,000 perennials in just four days in 2000. Constructed wetlands, savanna, and prairies, a restored bandstand (originally built in 1876 and replaced in 1925) in Pagoda Circle, new bridges, trails and roads, and dramatic limestone riffles now enliven the reimagined River des Peres.

Landscape Type:
Public Park

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
H3 Studio
John Hoal
Maximillian Kern
Darrel Morrison
Wolfgang Oehme
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
James van Sweden
Austin Tao

Related Landscapes:
Forest Park



Forest Park - Exposition Grounds



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

In 1899 St. Louis secured funding and approval to host the next World's Fair, celebrating the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1901 the city selected Forest Park for the fairgrounds and established a nine-member "commission of architects," led by Chief of Design Emmanuel Masqueray. Other members included St. Louis firms such as Eames and Young and celebrated Beaux-Arts architects such as Cass Gilbert, Carrère and Hastings, and Van Brunt and Howe. George Kessler was appointed the fair's landscape architect with Julius Pitzman as landscape engineer. The fairground ultimately incorporated 1,272 acres, including 657 acres located west of Forest Park. Gilbert's master plan emphasized strong axial sightlines defined by shaded avenues lined with international displays. Kessler's landscape plan united the nearly 1,500 buildings with formal avenues, gravel paths, pavilions, and arcades. He took advantage of the site's topographic variation, constructing sloped and sunken gardens, hilltop panoramas, and animating water features, including cascades that flowed into the 600-foot-long Grand Basin which served as a central spine for the fairgrounds. The River des Peres was also rerouted and buried as part of this work. Myriad elaborate planting beds were embroidered throughout the grounds, with thousands of incandescent electric lights illuminating buildings and landscape features. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition opened April 30, 1904 and ended December first of that year. Kessler continued to improve the grounds of Forest Park after the fair. Though most fair structures were removed, as intended, Gilbert's Palace of Fine Arts (now the St. Louis Art Museum) was preserved. Profit generated by the fair was allocated to build a commemorative World's Fair Pavilion designed by Kessler's protégé Henry Wright in 1909, with a landscape designed by Kessler's firm.

Beginning in the 1990s, the city developed a new master plan for Forest Park and undertook a series of major rehabilitations, including restoration of the Grand Basin, with involvement from architects and landscape architects Kelly/Varnell, HOK, SWT Design, H3 Studio, and Oehme, van Sweden & Associates.

Landscape Type:
Exposition Grounds

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
Carrère and Hastings
Cass Gilbert
H3 Studio
HOK
Eames and Young
Kelly/Varnell
George E. Kessler
Emmanuel Masqueray
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Julius Pitzman
Eda A. Sutermeister
SWT Design
Van Brunt and Howe
Henry Wright

Related Landscapes:
Forest Park



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Missouri Botanical Garden

Historical Name:

Shaw's Garden

Landscape Type:

Botanical Garden

Landscape Styles:

Picturesque

Victorian Gardenesque

Designed By:

Harriet Rodes Bakewell

Koichi Kawana

Layton, Layton, and Rohrbach

Murphy and Mackey Architects

Stuart M. Mertz

John Noyes

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

John Charles Olmsted

Olmsted Brothers

Pashek + MTR

Henry Shaw

Michael Vergason Landscape

Architects

Related Landscapes:

Japanese Garden

Climatron

This 79-acre research institution and public garden was established in 1859 by the Englishman Henry Shaw. The ornamental and instructive plantings, largely Victorian in character, were originally laid out by Shaw with horticulturalist James Gurney, Sr., based on a tripartite organization of arboretum, fruticetum, and flower gardens. Large conservatories and numerous pavilions, including the Linnaean House (the oldest remaining display house in the U.S.), flanked the axis that linked the garden grounds with Shaw's personal estate, Tower Grove. After Shaw's death in 1889, the grounds were rearranged to reflect a more naturalistic style. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and John Charles Olmsted submitted a master plan in 1896, some of which was implemented but is no longer extant.

In 1913 John Noyes was hired as an instructor at the Shaw School of Botany. He oversaw the addition of the Palm, Desert, Mediterranean, and Floral Display Houses, the Italian and Perennial Gardens, the Knolls, and several other features. Noyes also created St. Louis' first rose garden, with rare specimens garnered from the Arnold Arboretum. Layton, Layton, and Rohrbach developed a master plan in 1960, re-establishing the original north-south axis. Other notable features are the Climatron (1960), a geodesic dome-shaped conservatory based on the principles of Buckminster Fuller, the Anne L. Lehmann Rose Garden designed by Harriet Rodes Bakewell, an herb garden designed by Edith Mason, and the fourteen-acre Japanese Garden, Seiwa-En, designed by Koichi Kawana in 1977. Between 1971 and 2009 Director Peter Raven continued Shaw's mandate of research, display, and education. Landscape architects Pashek + MTR have developed and updated a master plan for the garden over 30 years, implementing renovations to the path system, rose gardens, and lily ponds and Climatron Axis, among other projects. A new visitor center was designed by Ayers Saint Gross with Michael Vergason Landscape Architects and completed in 2022. The Missouri Botanical Garden was named a National Historic Landmark in 1971.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Missouri Botanical Garden - Japanese Garden

Landscape Type:
Botanical Garden

Landscape Style:
Japanese

Designed By:
Harriet Rodes Bakewell
Koichi Kawana

Related Landscapes:
Missouri Botanical Garden

In 1972 the Japanese American Citizen's League proposed a Japanese garden to be constructed in the Missouri Botanical Garden. Supervised by Harriet Rodes Bakewell and designed by Koichi Kawana, Seiwa-en ("garden of pure, clear harmony and peace") reflects traditional aspects of Japanese gardens: hidden views, use of natural materials, irregular shapes, and blank canvases of color that induce the attentive mind to become lost in meditation. The landscape is authentic to the chisen kaiyu shiki teien, or "pond strolling garden" style of the late nineteenth century Edo period, featuring open lawns surrounding a large lake.

At fourteen acres, Seiwa-en is the largest traditional Japanese Garden in the western hemisphere. A meandering path leads visitors through minimalist plantings of chrysanthemums, peonies, azaleas, and cherry trees. There are bridges from which koi can be fed, dry gardens, and an island tea house. Streams and waterfalls empty into the landscape's centerpiece: a four-acre lake with four islands that are formed to represent traditional Japanese symbols. Two of the islands are inaccessible, the tortoise and crane islands, which both represent longevity. At the Azumaya waiting bench (koshikake machial), guests can view the lake and rest shaded by plum trees.



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Missouri Botanical Garden - Climatron

Landscape Type:
Botanical Garden

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Emmett Layton
Layton, Layton, and Rohrbach
Paul Londe
Eugene Mackey
Joseph D. Murphy
Murphy and Mackey Architects
John Noyes
Pashek + MTR

Related Landscapes:
Missouri Botanical Garden

Rising 70 feet above the open fields of the 79-acre Missouri Botanical Garden, this geodesic dome-covered site forms one of the most distinctive landscape features found within the St. Louis region. Designed and constructed by the architecture firm Murphy and Mackey in coordination with structural engineer Paul Londe and local landscape architect Emmett Layton, the 175-foot-diameter structure became the first geodesic dome in the world to be utilized as a conservatory greenhouse when it opened to the public on October 1, 1960. The structure is located toward the terminus of the Missouri Botanical Garden, to the west of Tower Grove Park off Shaw Boulevard, and is the primary conservatory for the site, where nearly 3,000 species of tropical plant species are cultivated and maintained year-round.

The Climatron is engineered to require no interior structural elements, instead utilizing a series of triangulated exterior steel framing members supporting the nearly 2,500 glass panels that comprise its envelope. This design allows for both a consistent exposure to natural sunlight, and an unobstructed interior volume of 1.3 million cubic feet, within which the garden's team of scientists, researchers, and horticulturalists can maintain tropical plant species from around the world. The paths navigating this massive structure are organized in an interconnecting serpentine layout, starting at the primary entrance at a higher elevation, and concluding at the lower elevation of an addition added to the structure in 1988. This allows for the optimum amount of surface growing area for the plants housed within the exhibit, as well as a series of framed views spanning across the structure from multiple vantage points.



Tower Grove Park



Photo by Barrett Doherty

Established by Henry Shaw on his own private land, this 280-acre linear park was designed and developed by Shaw and donated to the City of St. Louis in 1868. Shaw had previously founded the adjacent Missouri Botanical Garden on land that was also part of his estate, Tower Grove. Little altered since its conception, the park is situated on a long, narrow strip of land that was once an open prairie. James Gurney, Sr., whom Shaw had hired from England's Royal Horticultural Society to be head gardener at the Missouri Botanical Garden, served as consultant for Tower Grove Park. Curvilinear roads and paths were laid out closer to the edge of the property on the western half, while a wide central allée with a road and parallel paths runs the length of the eastern end of the park. Lily ponds, bridges, fountains, statuary, stables, residences, and two conservatories, including the 1878 Palm House (the oldest extant greenhouse west of the Mississippi) were strategically sited for their scenic benefits throughout the park, which also includes a collection of 435 varieties of more than 10,000 trees and woody shrubs. The park's twelve shelters (in styles ranging from Oriental to Turkish) include pavilions, follies, and a music stand. Half of these were designed by architect Eugene Greenleaf, with other structures designed by Henry Thiele, Francis Tunica, and George Barnett. Since 1988, under the leadership of the Friends of Tower Grove Park, the site has undergone extensive restoration and rehabilitation. An approach to planting, based on original plant lists and other documents guides the selection and installation of new specimens, gradually reestablishing much of Shaw's original Victorian Gardenesque vision. A 2016 master plan by Rhodeside & Harwell landscape architects improved accessibility and expanded passive and active recreational opportunities. The daylighting of a historic stream, buried for more than a century, was undertaken by Lamar Johnson Collaborative with input from representatives of the Osage Nation in 2017. A tree restoration plan, developed with SWT Design landscape architects in 2017, informs the renewal of the park's canopy. Tower Grove Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1989.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Neighborhood Park

Landscape Style:
Victorian Gardenesque

Designed By:
George I. Barnett
Eugene Greenleaf
James Gurney
Lamar Johnson Collaborative
Rhodeside & Harwell
Henry Shaw
SWT Design
Henry Thiele
Francis Tunica



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Lafayette Park

Histoical Name:
Grimsley's Folley

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Greens/Commons/Squares

Landscape Style:
Victorian

Designed By:
H3 Studio
Maximilian G. Kern
Stuart M. Mertz & Associates
SWT Design

Originally part of the St. Louis Commons, this 30-acre site was designated a public square in 1836. With its dedication in 1851 the space became the city's first park. Named for the Marquis de Lafayette, the park is bounded by Lafayette, Mississippi, Missouri, and Park Avenues and shares its name with the surrounding neighborhood. A Board of Improvement was established to administer the park upon its formation, and Maximilian Kern hired as the park's superintendent. Kern improved the nearly barren tract, planting trees and installing numerous landscape features, including a lake, grotto, and paths. The popularity of the park necessitated the construction of a police substation in 1867. An iron fence surrounding the park was installed and statues of Senator Thomas Benton (1868) and George Washington (1869) were erected. Curvilinear paths shaded by canopy trees work with the site's topographic variation, meandering from the entrances towards the park's center. Amenities are concentrated in the southern half of the park, while an open lawn in the northwest corner houses an athletic field. In 1896 a tornado damaged nearly all the park's trees and destroyed structures. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, many park features were replaced or altered, though the path system, central lake, grotto, Benton and Washington statues, and ornate fencing remained intact. A Mediterranean boathouse was constructed in 1908, still extant. In the 1950s, the northwest corner of the park was regraded to accommodate athletic fields designed by Stuart M. Mertz & Associates landscape architects. The Lafayette Park Conservancy, founded in 2001, is housed in the former police substation (now the Park House). Following a 2004 Master Plan undertaken by the City and the Conservancy with H3 Studio, rehabilitation efforts include the grotto and bridge (2012) and the boathouse (2014, now the Kern Lakeside Pavilion). A Tree Master Plan for Lafayette Park was prepared in 2016 by SWT Design. The gazebo, rebuilt several times, is now known as the Betsy Cook Pavilion and is embellished with native and tropical plants. Lafayette Park is a contributing feature of the Lafayette Square Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

O'Fallon Park

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Neighborhood Park

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
George E. Kessler
Layton, Layton & Associates
Francis Tunica

The former estate of Colonel John O'Fallon, this site once offered sweeping views of the Mississippi River and held the family's home, mausoleum, and stables. A 158-acre tract of O'Fallon's land was purchased by the city of St. Louis from family heirs in 1874 and became an anchor supporting the city's northward expansion. One of three public parks established by city ordinance in 1874, O'Fallon Park officially opened in 1908. Originally, O'Fallon Park occupied 125 acres of open green space. Displeasure about the unkempt nature of the park spurred development and refinement, resulting in the creation of a five-acre lake with a central planted island and curvilinear roads laid out by local architect and landscape engineer Francis Tunica, followed by construction of a music stand and observation tower (both since demolished). Landscape architect George Kessler, who designed much of St. Louis' comprehensive park system, added an Art Deco-inspired boathouse in 1913 to complement a sister structure in Carondelet Park. The dramatic, rolling terrain is formed by ground that was removed to form the lake, creating a hilly landscape that undulates through the park's footprint. In 1956 the construction of Interstate 70 and associated circulation roads encroached on the park's north side. In 1964 Layton, Layton & Associates landscape architects opened a panoramic view to the Mississippi river bottom. The start of the 21st century marked a new era of park development, characterized by the addition of a community recreation complex and a universally accessible playground. In 2021, a redevelopment plan for the park resulted in upgraded infrastructure, boathouse rehabilitation, and the reinstatement of rowboat rides in the lake – an activity that had been abandoned in the 1970s. Originally used as a “driving park,” O'Fallon Park now serves passive park uses such as walking, jogging, picnicking, and fishing, and active recreation such as tennis, football, and basketball. The park maintains a balance between expansive open parkland and shady areas defined by clusters of mature canopy trees.



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Fairground Park

Once the site of the Agricultural and Mechanical Fair in the second half of the nineteenth century, this 131-acre park historically featured a three-story hall for showing poultry, a horse racing track, and a large amphitheater. The fairgrounds became Benton Barracks at the outbreak of the Civil War; the fair continued in its aftermath. A zoo was added to the complex in 1876, but due to financial struggles the animals went out for public auction in 1891 and were acquired by the city for the upcoming public zoo in Forest Park. In 1908, the city purchased the property and designated it as Fairground Park.

The amphitheater was converted into a whites-only municipal swimming pool in 1919, said to be the largest in the nation at the time. In 1949, the Supreme Court ruled that discrimination in public spaces violated the Fourteenth Amendment, and city officials opened the pool to all St. Louisans. The violent events that transpired after this decision became known as the Fairground Park Riot. This was a pivotal moment in St. Louis' history, accelerating white flight to the suburbs. A year later, a federal judge ordered the integration of St. Louis swimming pools without incident, but the pool was subsequently closed and filled in. A new, smaller pool was built in 1957 at the intersection of Vandeventer and Natural Bridge Avenues.

The rectangular park features additional amenities including a lake, pavilion, sports fields, playground, and roller-skating rink. River birch and bald cypress dot the lake's edge, while maples and oaks provide shade adjacent to the sports fields. The fortress at the park's southern corner and the notable white stone bridge are the only remaining tangible vestiges of the park's historic use as a fair.

Historic Name:
Benton Barracks

Landscape Types:
Public Park -
Neighborhood Park
Exposition Grounds

Landscape Style:
Spanish Colonial Revival
(Hispano-Moorish)

Designed By:
George E. Kessler



Carondelet Park



Photo by Barrett Doherty

Encompassing approximately 180 acres, most of this parkland was once part of the common land of Carondelet village. Public campaigns in the early 1870s resulted in the City of St. Louis purchasing land for Carondelet Park in 1874. Just over a mile west of the Mississippi River, the park is bounded by Holly Hills Boulevard, Loughborough Avenue, Interstate 55, and Leona Street. An undulating topography, shaped by underground caves and sinkholes, creates a Picturesque effect augmented by early city-led park development. Scenic drives, introduced in 1890, follow the ridge lines winding through the landscape. A bridge entering the park's north side was constructed as part of an effort to link major parks and cemeteries along a singular artery, a project overseen by George Kessler from 1902 to 1909. Nine sinkholes were joined in 1913 to form Horseshoe Lake, now one of two lakes. Most of the park is open lawn, with scattered mature oak and hickory trees providing shade. Most structures in the park were built before the 1920s, including the Boathouse (1918), Music Stand (1898) and Music Pavilion (1898). The wood-frame Alexander Lyle House (circa 1850) predates the park and belonged to a family who had occupied part of the land since pioneer days. It was first used as the park director's residence before being converted into a senior center in 1931. This third-largest park in the city offers opportunities for both active and passive recreation, including tennis courts, softball, baseball, and soccer fields, as well as playgrounds, stocked fishing lakes, a recycling center, picnic areas, and a 1.6-mile bicycle path. A master plan developed by H3 Studio in 2003 proposed ecological and structural upgrades and improved connections with surrounding communities but was not fully implemented. The one-mile Carondelet Connector, opened by Great Rivers Greenway in 2014, links the park's trail system to the nine-mile River des Peres Greenway. A recreation center operated by the YMCA is located at the east end of the park adjacent to Interstate 55.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Neighborhood Park

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Great Rivers Greenway
H3 Studio
George E. Kessler



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Gateway Arch National Park

Historic Name:
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
National Park

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
James Carpenter Design Associates
Cooper Robertson
Joe Karr
Dan Kiley
Office of Dan Kiley
Eero Saarinen
Michael Van Valkenburgh Landscape
Associates

Related Landscapes:
Gateway Mall

Located on the western bank of the Mississippi River, the 630-foot-tall stainless steel arch is the centerpiece of this 91-acre national park. The land for the Jefferson Expansion National Memorial was set aside by Executive Order in 1935 and a design competition for the site was won by Eero Saarinen and Dan Kiley in 1947. Their winning design was asymmetrical and heavily wooded, proposing that Saarinen's Gateway Arch rise from an urban forest. Implementation was delayed until 1957 when funding became available. Saarinen and Kiley revisited their original design to create a concept that respected important axial sight lines between the Gateway Arch and the Old Courthouse. The sweeping landscape reflects the curve of the Arch, repeating the curvature in walkways, stairs, and site walls. The Gateway Arch was completed in 1965 and dedicated in 1968, with landscape construction continuing for more than a decade. In 2009 Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates won a design competition for improving the visitor experience. Completed in 2018, and funded by a public-private partnership, the work improved park access with the addition of a 280-foot-long pedestrian land bridge across Interstate 40, regraded the site, and introduced pedestrian and bike paths to improve connectivity with the surrounding neighborhood. A parking garage on the park's north side was replaced by a bowl-shaped lawn. Kiley's design intent was retained, with some trees, shrubs, and perennials throughout replaced with native and more resilient species. A subterranean visitor center, also designed by Saarinen, was replaced with one designed by Cooper Robertson and James Carpenter Design Associates with a glass-fronted entrance and a regraded western approach that reinforced visual and physical connections with Luther Ely Smith Square and the Old Courthouse. The park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987. In 2018 it was rededicated as Gateway Arch National Park.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Gateway Mall

Photo by Barrett Doherty



The narrow downtown corridor of parks and plazas extending west from the Gateway Arch to 20th Street evolved incrementally for more than a century, beginning with the landmark 1907 comprehensive plan. Inspired by City Beautiful principles, the plan proposed grouping public buildings around a central park or mall. In 1919 city planner Harland Bartholomew integrated this proposal into a plan for public parks and civic buildings adjacent to City Hall and the Public Library. In the 1920s multiple blocks between Market and Chestnut Streets were cleared and two plazas, Aloe Plaza to the west and Memorial Plaza to the east, were sited on the same axis. By 1962 every block on this axis, between the Civil Courts Building and 20th Street, had been converted into public green space.

In 1966 the city sponsored a national design competition for the Gateway Mall linking the Old Courthouse, situated directly west of the Gateway Arch, with a proposed roadway near 22nd street. The winning design by Sasaki, Dawson & DeMay replaced buildings east of Eleventh Street with a central lawn flanked by berms. In 1976 a modified version of the design was constructed on a single block, between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, but following negative public response further construction was abandoned. The block was regraded and selected for Richard Serra's sculpture, *Twain*.

Development continued to the 1990s but lacked a cohesive plan. Kiener Plaza Park, initially built in 1962, was extended west in 1986. The blocks between Eighth and Tenth Streets were converted to lawns bordered by asymmetrical plantings of trees. A 2009 master plan for the Gateway Mall by Thomas Balsley Associates recommended creating distinct zones along the mall. The city memorialized this concept with the completion of Citygarden, the redesign of Kiener Plaza, and the renovations of both the Soldiers Memorial Military Museum and the Gateway Arch National Park.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Pedestrian Mall

Landscape Style:
Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
Thomas Balsley Associates
Harland Bartholomew & Associates
Mackey Mitchell Architects
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates
Nelson Byrd Woltz
Sasaki, Dawson & DeMay

Related Landscapes:
Gateway Arch National Park
Luther Ely Smith Park
Citygarden Sculpture Park
Kiener Plaza Park
Serra Sculpture Park
Poelker Park
Soldiers Memorial and
Military Museum
Memorial Plaza
Aloe Plaza



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Aloe Plaza

Landscape Types:
 Plaza
 Public Park -
 Greens/Commons/Squares

Landscape Style:
 Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
 Harland Bartholomew & Associates
 Emmett Layton
 Layton, Layton & Associates
 Carl Milles

Related Landscapes:
 Gateway Mall

This approximately three-acre plaza is located at the western terminus of the Gateway Mall, bound by Eighteenth, Twentieth, Chestnut, and Market Streets, sloping towards the latter. Following the approval of a bond issue in 1923, multiple blocks between Market and Chestnut Streets were cleared to accommodate Harland Bartholomew's 1919 plan, which reimagined the area using City Beautiful principles. Funds from the bond issue were used to construct the plaza, which opened in 1932. The perimeter of the rectilinear space was planted with an alleé of canopy trees, while symmetrical north-south oriented paths met at its center and encircled a garden. During the 1930s the original plan was altered to accommodate Carl Milles' fountain, *The Meeting of the Waters*, commissioned by Edith Aloe. The fountain was dedicated in 1940 and the plaza was named in honor of Edith Aloe's late husband, Louis Aloe, the former president of the Board of Alderman. The long, rectangular basin features two facing human figures that symbolize the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, surrounded by a symmetrical arrangement of both real and mythical creatures that seem to dance and leap out of the fountain. Axial jets placed behind each human figure, propel liquid straight up into the air while angled spouts located on the creatures themselves project water in various directions. Milles determined the placement of the bronze figures and the jets, detailing the piping dimensions to control the water velocity and patterns, while allowing changing light and wind to influence the work. The fountain is flanked by compact turfgrass panels, which are punctuated by benches and edged by mature trees. The plaza was replanted by Layton, Layton, & Associates in 1954. The balanced plaza is juxtaposed by the asymmetrical Memorial Plaza to the east and offers views of the historic Romanesque Revival Union Station across Market Street.



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Photos by Barrett Doherty

Soldiers Memorial Military Museum

A 1919 plan, written with the assistance of Harland Bartholomew, reimagined the area around Market Street and Twelfth Street following principles of the City Beautiful movement. Bartholomew and his peers envisioned a mall surrounded by municipal buildings, including a memorial to honor fallen World War I veterans. Following the approval of a bond issue in 1923, multiple blocks between Market and Chestnut Streets were cleared to accommodate the plan, displacing largely African American tenants and property owners. Seven blocks were set aside as public space and its center block was chosen as the site of the new memorial. Designed by local architecture firm Mauran, Russell & Crowell, the Neoclassical edifice, adorned by modest Art Deco details, was completed in 1938. The museum building faces a commemorative plaza, The Court of Honor, to the south. The court was designed by Eugene Mackey, Jr., and opened in 1948. In 2015 the Missouri Historical Society assumed operation of the four-acre property and assembled a team led by Mackey Mitchell Architects with DTLS Landscape Architecture to revitalize the memorial Court of Honor. The work preserved the historic character of the space while strengthening the axial relationship between building and plaza. Though separated by a street, the plinth of the memorial and the plaza are bound by shared elements, such as metal bollards and a sidewalk interlaid with granite bands. Linear sidewalks bisect the plaza which, along with mature trees and walls featuring memorial plaques, define room-like spaces along the edges of a reinforced turf lawn. A black, linear reflecting pool extends through the approximate center of the plaza and is aligned with a relatively thin, 40-foot-tall limestone pillar, designed by Hillis Arnold. The reflecting pool is complemented by a raised water feature to the north, oriented on axis with the museum and featuring fountain jets and corresponding inscriptions for five branches of the United States military.

Landscape Types:
 Plaza
 Institutional Grounds -
 Cultural Institution

Landscape Style:
 Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:
 Hillis Arnold
 Harland Bartholomew & Associates
 DTLS Landscape Architecture
 Mackey Mitchell Architects
 Mauran, Russell & Crowell

Related Landscapes:
 Gateway Mall



Citygarden Sculpture Park

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Vest Pocket Park

Landscape Style:
Postmodernist

Designed By:
Arcturis
Warren T. Byrd, Jr.
Nelson Byrd Woltz

Related Landscapes:
Gateway Mall

In 2007, the Gateway Foundation proposed a partnership with the City of St. Louis to convert two adjacent lots, situated in the Gateway Mall between Eighth and Tenth Streets, into a sculpture garden. Upon approval, Warren Byrd, of the landscape architecture firm Nelson Byrd Woltz, was tasked with transforming the lots, once monotonous stretches of lawn, into an accessible and vibrant public space.

Completed in 2009, the approximately three-acre park achieves a sense of openness by forgoing entry gates or a perimeter fence or wall. Visitors are welcome to touch the many sculptures spread throughout the park and interact with the diverse water features. The western portion of the park includes a spray plaza composed of over 100 night-lit vertical jets, twenty feet wide, and sixteen inches deep. A 550-foot-long, arched wall of Missouri limestone splits the basin in two and is marked by a waterfall. These features, along with the broad stepping-stone-like slabs placed at the base of the cascade, reference the natural geomorphology of the nearby Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. A serpentine bench of polished granite traverses the southern length of the park, similarly recalling local riparian shapes. The surrounding region is also evoked through the chosen planting palette. Working with horticulturalists from the Missouri Botanical Garden, plants were chosen for native character, seasonal interest, and tolerance to drought, shade, and urban conditions. Among the numerous plantings, a prominent allée of fruitless ginkgo trees runs parallel to Market Street, offering both shade and framed views of the Gateway Arch. Twenty-five sculptures are spread throughout the park. Among the 23 artists represented are Niki de Saint Phalle, Mark di Suvero, Laura Ford, Keith Haring, Fernand Léger, Aristide Maillol, Igor Mitoraj, Tom Otterness, Martin Puryear and Tony Smith.



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo Barrett Doherty

Photo by Steve Hall - Courtesy Nelson Byrd Woltz



Pulitzer Arts Foundation

Photo by Alise O' Brien - Courtesy Pulitzer Arts Foundation



The linear, rectangular pool comprising the water court of the Tadao Ando designed museum in St. Louis' Grand Center Arts District reflects not just the concrete, canyon-like walls of the building itself, but the tops of the trees planted in the bordering irregularly shaped lot. Early in the 21st century, the Pulitzer Arts Foundation transformed the space from a vacant lot into a small park replete with plantings of chinkapin oak, green ash, honey locust, and redbud.

Landscape Type:
Institutional Grounds -
Cultural Institution

Designed By:
Tadao Ando
Chris Carl
Studio Land Arts

Years later, the foundation similarly looked towards landscape design to transform an adjacent underutilized vacant lot into a multifunctional one. Park-Like, designed and built by Chris Carl, the founder of Studio Land Arts, occupies an approximately 0.6-acre rectangular lot directly across from the museum on Washington Avenue. With its dense, naturalistic plantings of both native and non-native species, the space functions as a rain garden, capturing and storing runoff from the adjoining property. Park-Like owes much of its appearance and form to the discoveries made during its construction. While excavating the site, myriad artifacts were unearthed including brick, stone, and even a piece of Corinthian capital. These architectural elements were all incorporated into the site: the stone was utilized as piles of riprap; the brick was bound by gabion baskets and used as benches; and the capital was displayed as a decorative piece. The construction process also influenced the site's path layout. Carl noted the meandering paths formed by the construction equipment and machines, and ultimately revised the plan to recall these movements.

Ravaged by a fire in 2001, a roofless stone shell of a former church stands northwest of Park-Like on the same block. In 2022 the foundation completed improvements of the structure, dubbed Spring Church, and with Studio Land Arts transforming an adjacent lot into a green space.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Alise O' Brien -
Courtesy Pulitzer Arts Foundation



Photo courtesy Pulitzer Arts Foundation

Laclede's Landing

Category:

Vernacular Landscape

Landscape Type:

Public Park -
Waterfront Development

Designed By:

Auguste Chouteau
Great Rivers Greenway
HOK
Lamar Johnson Collaborative
Pierre Laclède
Planning Design Studio

Many of the emblematic brick and cast-iron buildings that populate this historic 22-acre district date to the 1880s. During the Great Fire of 1849, which began on the steamboat *White Cloud*, the blaze quickly spread to adjacent docked watercraft and wooden warehouses, razing fifteen city blocks. Reconstructed cast-iron and brick warehouses quickly sprang up in Laclede's Landing to support riverfront commerce crucial to the city's expansion. The original city plan established by Auguste Chouteau and Pierre Laclède in 1763 was preserved, with short city blocks and an orientation towards the Mississippi River as its key eastern axis.

Presently, this is the only portion of the waterfront with most of its nineteenth century structures extant, a reminder of the city's past as a commercial powerhouse. By the mid-1960s, local government determined the area's compact footprint was unable to support contemporary industrial activity and designated it for redevelopment. A series of proposals came forth over the next decade to transform the Landing into a downtown destination, with Planning Design Studio leading master plan efforts. Streets running north-south feature original cobbled paving, while streets running east-west have been paved with concrete for improved transit. The brick-paved sidewalks are lined with street trees and historical light fixtures framing views towards the Gateway Arch and the Eads Bridge. The mixed-use district spans nine square city blocks just north of the Gateway Arch National Park. On the southern edge of the site lies the recently constructed half-acre park/plaza, the Katherine Ward Burg Garden, designed by Lamar Johnson Collaborative with support from Great Rivers Greenway, offering panoramic views of the Mississippi River. Laclede's Landing was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Photo courtesy Aaron Fuhrman - Explore St. Louis



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Washington University in St. Louis - Danforth Campus



Photo by Barrett Doherty

In 1853 St. Louis civic leaders secured a charter to establish a university. In 1854 Washington Institute began offering classes in downtown St. Louis, growing over the next three decades to encompass three academies and a medical college, spread across disparate facilities. The school modified its charter to become Washington University in 1857 (with trustees adding “in St. Louis” in 1976). In the 1890s, a committee supported by philanthropist Robert Brookings engaged Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot to assist in siting a centralized campus, acquiring 103 acres on high ground west of Forest Park. The Olmsted firm’s 1895 site plans and Cope & Stewardson’s 1899 “block plan” defined the Hilltop academic village on the west side and the east side’s Picturesque “front lawn,” physically and visually connected to Forest Park. An early example of the Collegiate Gothic style in America, Cope & Stewardson’s plan surrounded quadrangle courtyards with limestone and granite buildings. On the west side, ginkgo allées and canopy trees frame linear pedestrian paths and courtyards, while on the east side, paths meandered through groupings of oak and basswood. Campus buildings were leased to organizers of the 1904 World’s Fair, with classes resuming in 1905. Additions including buildings and plazas by Jamieson and Spearl (1933), Maki & Associates (1998), and SWT Design (2018) diversified the campus. In 2006, the Hilltop Campus was renamed in honor of former chancellor William Danforth. As the campus developed, ultimately comprising 169 acres, the open lawn envisioned by the Olmsted plan was overtaken by buildings and parking lots. A 2016 comprehensive plan revived some of the Olmsted firm’s design concepts, reintroducing open parkland to the eastern end and reconnecting the campus with Forest Park. Nineteen buildings contribute to the Danforth Campus Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. The district was expanded in 1987 and achieved National Historic Landmark status the same year.

Landscape Type:

Campus -
Quadrangle Plan

Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

Designed By:

Arbolope Studio
Arcturis
BNIM
Cope & Stewardson
Edward D. Bolton
KieranTimberlake
Mackey Mitchell Architects
Warren H. Manning
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
Moore Ruble Yudell
Olmsted Brothers
Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot

Related Landscapes:

Tisch Park & East End



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Washington University in St. Louis - East End & Tisch Park

Landscape Type:
Campus -
Multiversity Campus

Designed By:
Arbolope Studio
Arcturis
BNIM
Cope & Stewardson
KieranTimberlake
Mackey Mitchell Architects
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
Moore Ruble Yudell
Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot
Perkins Eastman

Related Landscapes:
Danforth Campus

In 1895 the Olmsted office created a master plan for the campus of Washington University in St. Louis, which included a park-like eastern portion connecting to Skinner and Lindell Boulevards and Forest Park beyond. A building plan by Cope & Stewardson established the location of buildings. While this setting allowed for a flexible structure as the university grew, it did not account for an expansion that extended east of Hoyt Drive, and the university eventually paved surface parking lots over much of the campus' east side. In 2017, the university committed to redeveloping the eighteen-acre plot to expand academic programming, foster interaction, recapture the original design intent for the campus entrance, and improve the transition between the university and nearby Forest Park. Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, in collaboration with architecture firms KieranTimberlake, BNIM, Moore Ruble Yudell and Perkins Eastman, transformed the existing parking sprawl by introducing a subterranean parking garage, configuring connections between colleges and administrative buildings, and accommodating an extension to the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. The East End was almost entirely regraded to the same elevation, increasing accessibility and visibility across this portion of campus. Ann and Andrew Tisch Park, bounded by the McKelvey School of Engineering on the north edge and the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts to the south, creates a central location for congregation and offers a tree-lined framing of historic Brookings Hall. Two new alléed walkways are reminiscent of the original plan designed by Cope & Stewardson, maintaining a ceremonial entry to campus. The East End features over 30 tree species, many of which are native to the region. The Florence Steinberg Weil Sculpture Garden features artworks from the Kemper Art Museum's collection. A sunken garden courtyard between Anabeth and John Weil Hall and the Gary M. Summers Welcome Center provides a source of natural light to the underground parking garage and is home to a felled tree, now nurse log, from the former allée.



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Photos courtesy Maya Lin Studio

Ellen S. Clark Hope Plaza

Located at the eastern edge of Washington University Medical Center's campus, this 2.2-acre rectilinear plaza was designed by the artist Maya Lin, in partnership with Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc., to provide a place for repose for patients and their guests. The courtyard, completed in 2010 fronts the northeast entrance of the BJC Institute of Health, and is framed, but not completely bound, by buildings. Though the perimeter of the space is defined by straight lines and right angles, its interior embraces biomorphic shapes. Viewers are intended to experience the plaza both from the ground and from above. Viewed from one of the surrounding buildings, the abstract composition of the space becomes obvious. The plaza interrupts two streets, Euclid Avenue and Children's Place. As the street near or meet the plaza they lose their linear form, becoming curvilinear pedestrian pathways that frame organically-shaped planting beds. The separate beds, each planted with native vegetation, radiate around a central, circular fountain, titled *Uplift*, designed by Maya Lin. The fountain, measuring 70 feet in diameter, recedes into the sloped plaza. While the northeast edge of the level fountain rises above the ground, its opposite side sits relatively flush with the ground plane. A circular, concrete platform, 38 feet in diameter, extends over the water, inviting viewers to actively interact with the work. Walking on the platform, visitors are meant to feel as if they are floating on the water, much like the native water lilies placed in the fountain each spring. The platform interrupts a narrow stone border, which otherwise surrounds the perimeter of the pool. This border is bound by a wide ring of embedded aggregate, which is similarly framed by concrete. This diverse material palette contributes to the painterly composition of the space. At night, the platform displays a constellation-like pattern of lights. Working with Tillett Lighting Design Associates, Lin embedded fiber-optic lights to reference the St. Louis night sky on December 25, 1958, the birthday of the plaza's benefactor and namesake, Ellen S. Clark.

Landscape Types:
Public Park
Plaza

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Maya Lin
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc.



Photos courtesy Maya Lin Studio

Bellefontaine Cemetery

Category:

Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:

Cemetery -
Rural Cemetery

Landscape Style:

Picturesque

Designed By:

William Cullina
DTLS Landscape Architecture
Eames and Young
Almerin Hotchkiss
Earen Hummel
John Noyes
Herb Schaal

In 1849 former mayor John Darby and banker William McPherson organized a group to establish the first rural cemetery west of the Mississippi River. The consortium purchased 138-acres of rolling land north of the city, overlooking the Mississippi River, including the Hempstead family farm and graveyard. Almerin Hotchkiss was hired from The Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, to lay out the grounds and to act as the cemetery’s superintendent, a position he retained for the next 46 years. In 1850 the burial ground was dedicated; the name “Bellefontaine” references both the former military post to the north and the road bordering the site’s eastern side. Hotchkiss’ design featured fourteen miles of drives, including a four-mile primary road. The curvilinear roads were integrated into the site’s existing hills and valleys, following topographic lines, and offering panoramic views of the river. While some trees were removed to enhance views from the roads to family lots, Hotchkiss deliberately designed the routes to preserve and protect mature specimen trees and planted others along the site’s perimeter. Sculpture and funerary artworks abound throughout and Prospect Avenue, constructed along the river bluffs, is lined with ornate mausolea designed by notable architects. The Greek Revival-style Hotchkiss Chapel was erected in 1909, designed by local architecture firm Eames and Young. The cemetery also includes the Wainwright Mausoleum, one of only three mausolea designed by noted architect Louis Sullivan. In the twentieth century landscape architect John Noyes was engaged to renew the cemetery’s plantings. Today the cemetery encompasses 314 acres; it has over 5,000 trees representing nearly 200 distinct varieties, and in 2012 became a rare accredited cemetery arboretum. Landscape architect Herb Schaal along with a team including Earen Hummel and DTLS Landscape Architecture completed a commemorative garden featuring native plantings and a naturalized, meandering stream in 2014. Although the cemetery is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places the Wainwright Tomb was designated in 1970.



Photos courtesy Bellefontaine Cemetery



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Calvary Cemetery

Landscape Type:
Cemetery -
Rural Cemetery

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Missouri Department of Conservation

In 1853, Archbishop Peter Richard Kendrick purchased 323 acres of land from Senator Henry Clay to establish Calvary Cemetery. Over the years, management acquired adjacent parcels and expanded the grounds to comprise 470 acres of terrain. The cemetery is bounded by pressed-spear metal fencing along West Florissant Avenue, Calvary Avenue, an industrial rail line, and Riverview Boulevard. Sited on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River, the topography forms a crest that opens towards the river, with its highest point 90 feet above the lowest. Beginning soon after the cemetery's establishment, some burials from other Catholic cemeteries and burial grounds in St. Louis were reinterred at Calvary, which would become the final resting place for more than 300,000 individuals. Most graves are marked by traditional monuments and lawn-level markers. The arrangements of the graves run in a patchwork of grids that are roughly parallel to the curvilinear roads. The cemetery contains several notable mausoleums, including the All Saints Community Mausoleum, Shrine Community Mausoleum, and the Kern Mausoleum. These represent a variety of architectural movements including Neoclassical, Gothic Revival and Beaux-Arts. The landscape primarily consists of turf lawn and large shade trees, and the northern corner features the only remnant prairie in St. Louis. In the 1990s, biologists discovered this 25-acre plot located in the northern corner of the cemetery, which persisted through farming and development pressures following European settlement. The tract of land has been set aside for conservation and restoration in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, with efforts including reseeding, controlled burns and spot-spraying invasive species. Some notable people buried here include Dred Scott, Madame Pelagie Rutgers, Kate Chopin, Tennessee Williams, and William Tecumseh Sherman.



Photos by Barrett Doherty



Greenwood Cemetery

Landscape Type:
Cemetery -
Lawn Cemetery

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Herman Krueger

Founded in the late 1800s within the then-rural context of St. Louis County, this burial ground was established as the first non-denominational cemetery devoted specifically to serving St. Louis' African American population in the post-Civil War era. In January of 1874 Herman Krueger, a German immigrant and former superintendent of the nearby St. Peter's Cemetery, designated a ten-acre plot of land for members of the city's African American community to reliably and affordably lay their loved ones to rest. Within just six years of its founding, the site expanded to its current 32 acres, retaining its location directly off St. Louis Avenue, east of St. Peter's Cemetery.

The T-shaped site is located within the Hillsdale neighborhood, which grew to surround the area as suburban expansion increased during the early 1900s. Concrete planters and monolithic granite and limestone tombstones are organized on either side of the slightly deviating access road that runs diagonally eastward from the cemetery's main axis. These lines of headstones are further paired with a series of winding paths, which navigate throughout the heavily wooded regions on either end of the east-west axis, developing a landscape that is equal in its distribution of open parkland and wooded terrain. Since its establishment, the cemetery has become the resting place for more than 50,000 individuals, including veterans of both World Wars, musicians, and performers such as jazz guitarist Grant Green and vaudeville performer Harry Fiddler, and Harriet Scott, plaintiff along with her husband Dred Scott in the landmark 1857 Dred Scott v. Sandford case. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004, the cemetery began operating under the Greenwood Cemetery Preservation Association in 2016.



Photos by Barrett Doherty

St. Louis' Private Places

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Inspired by residential squares in England, with common space managed by property owners, residential enclaves emerged in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. These neighborhoods developed both outside of cities, where they were known as garden suburbs or residence parks, and within cities. Ordered, tranquil urban retreats built for wealthy residents with development controlled by residential covenants and deed restrictions arose in St. Louis in the 1850s and became known as private places. These places were typically characterized by a broad central boulevard, often edged by trees, divided by a verdant mall or median, lined with stately homes designed by prominent architects (e.g., Cope & Stewardson, H. H. Richardson), and set back from the street at a prescribed distance. Privacy and protection were often reinforced by single points of entry, limiting through traffic, and typically demarcated by ornate gates and gatehouse ensembles.

The first private place in St. Louis, Benton Place (1868) was designed by Julius Pitzman and established the pattern that other private places would imitate. It included 49 lots, each 25 feet wide, that faced either Lafayette Park across Park Avenue or an elliptical central mall. Pitzman subsequently planned myriad private places, including the Forest Park Addition (1888), which featured two boulevards, and Westmoreland Place and Portland Place. He additionally designed Lewis Place in 1890, which in the 1940s became the first private street in St. Louis owned by Black residents. By the turn of the century the private place concept proliferated and spread throughout the nation.

Multiple private places located in St. Louis are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including Westmoreland and Portland Places (1974), Lewis Place (1980), and Parkview (1986).

Landscape Type:

Suburb -
Garden City/ Garden Suburb

Landscape Styles:

Beaux Arts/Neoclassical
Italianate
Picturesque

Designed By:

George I. Barnett
George E. Kessler
James H. Lucas
Charles H. Peck
Julius Pitzman
H.H. Richardson
Cope & Stewardson



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

The Ville

Historical Name:
Elleardsville

Category:
Vernacular Landscape

Situated roughly three miles west of the Mississippi River in the heart of St. Louis, this half-square-mile historic district is located on the former estate of horticulturalist Charles Elleard, from whose name the area came to be called “Elleardsville.” The City of St. Louis annexed Elleardsville in 1876. Originally populated by German and Irish immigrants, the area bound by St. Louis Avenue, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, Sarah Street, and Taylor Street, colloquially known as “the Ville,” saw an influx of African American residents in the early 1910s, when racially restrictive housing covenants made it one of the only places where they could own property in the city. Landscape features are characteristic of the nineteenth century streetcar suburb, including detached residences, tree lawns, and rear yards. The neighborhood was a thriving microcosm of St. Louis’ Black community during its peak in the 1920s and 1930s, cultivating numerous public institutions, including Sumner High School, Phillips Hospital, and Stowe Teachers College; several notable figures, including entertainer Tina Turner and boxer Sonny Liston, hailed from the neighborhood. Residential, public, and commercial buildings were built in an eclectic variety of styles, including Art Deco, Colonial Revival, Second Empire, and Italianate. Following the Supreme Court’s 1948 ban on restrictive housing covenants, the population of the Ville began to decline as more residents became able to move elsewhere, eventually losing nearly 40% of its residents, along with many of its businesses and public amenities. Despite these losses, the Ville retains many of its historic structures as well as its legacy of nurturing education and creativity. The neighborhood was designated as a local historic district in 1987 and expanded in 2006. Three areas within the local historic district boundary, Cote Brilliante Avenue, St. Ferdinand Avenue, and the Marshall School Neighborhood, were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. The nonprofit organization, 4theVille, was founded by residents in 2017 to educate about the neighborhood’s history and advocate for its future.



Photo by Michael R. Allen



Dutchtown

Category:
Vernacular Landscape

Century-old brick bungalows, townhouses, and flats line the streets of this neighborhood approximately four miles south of downtown St. Louis, along the Mississippi River. The area of Dutchtown was originally part of the St. Louis Commons and the common fields of a once-independent town of Carondelet, annexed by St. Louis in 1870. Victorian-era storefronts sit at the corners of the grid of residential blocks and edge the commercial streets. The focal point of the neighborhood centers on the intersection of Meramec Street and Virginia Avenue, a topographical highpoint. One of the city’s most densely populated neighborhoods, Dutchtown’s porous border is defined differently by the city and local residents. Officially, Chippewa and Walsh Streets form the north and south borders, with irregular borders to the east and west shaped by Jefferson Avenue and South Broadway and the Missouri and Pacific Railroad tracks. Community members consider Dutchtown to encompass the adjacent neighborhoods of Gravois Park, Marine Villa, and Mount Pleasant. The streets follow a gentle slope from north to south and are nearly all paved with asphalt, the exception being an alley on Delor Street with brick pavers. Road verges line most of the streets, with canopy and understory trees for shade. Dutchtown features several formal green spaces, including Laclede, Marquette and Amberg Parks. Laclede Park was established in 1854 and exists today as an uninterrupted expanse of lawn with stone steps accounting for minimal elevation change. Sixteen-acre Marquette Park is the most sizable park, featuring rolling hills dotted with shade trees and understory plantings as well as active and passive recreation amenities. The two-acre Amberg Park, designed by landscape architect Robert Goetz in 1966, features a gazebo and baseball field. Residences throughout the neighborhood represent typical styles of the early twentieth century including Craftsman, Spanish, Classical Revival, and Italianate. Fine masonry craftsmanship is evident throughout the neighborhood, along with ornate roof details and open porches which blur the line between private life and street life.



Photos by Paul Sableman



Photo by Nick Findley

Katy Trail

Landscape Type:

Public Park -
State Park

Designed By:

Missouri Department of
Natural Resources

Related Landscapes:

Country Store Corridor

Stretching nearly 240 miles across central Missouri, this state park is the longest unbroken rail-to-trail corridor in the country. Created following the National Trails Systems Act of 1968, development of the park began in 1986 when flooding and the accompanying damage led to the abandonment of the railroad right-of-way. With initial financial support and leadership from Edward Jones, Jr., the first portion of the park opened in Rocheport in 1990. Developed by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the trail grew the following year when the Union Pacific Railroad donated 33 miles on the western end of the corridor, extending the trail to the town of Clinton. Some twenty years later, the greenway was expanded eastward to incorporate a corridor from St. Charles to Machens, where the trail ends today, fourteen miles from the Edward and Pat Jones Confluence Point State Park.

The earthen trail follows the northern banks of the Missouri River through forests, wetlands, and fields of open farmland. The route includes 26 trailheads that connect to small towns whose residents once depended on the railroad. Restored historic depots, a series of truss-and-trestle bridges, abandoned grain elevators, and a stone railroad tunnel recall the trail's past as a vital economic corridor. Running along tall bluffs and often the Missouri River, the trail is shaded by flowering deciduous trees, including dogwoods and redbuds, as well as maples, oaks and hickories. Several of the depots and other buildings along the trail have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including the Katy Depot in Sedalia in 1971, the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile in 2004, the Glosemeyer General Store in Peers in 2018 and the Treloar Mercantile and Farmers Bank in 2022.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by John Peckham



Photo courtesy Magnificent Missouri

Photo by Dennis Coello



Country Store Corridor

Category:
Vernacular Landscape

Related Landscapes:
Katy Trail

The approximately four-mile-long section of the Katy Trail that runs between the Glosemeyer General Store, in Peers, Missouri, and the Mercantile and Farmer’s Bank Building, in Treloar, Missouri, signifies the importance of the Missouri–Kansas–Texas (Katy) Railway and the Missouri River in early rural life. German immigrants constructed both the Glosemeyer store and the Treloar Mercantile to capitalize on the business brought by the Katy Railroad in 1896. The surrounding agricultural region came to be called the Missouri Rhineland, which took its name from its resemblance to the forested countryside of western Germany. After a flood in 1903, the course of the Missouri River shifted some two-and-a-half miles south, away from the Glosemeyer store. Although the store had served river traffic, it remained a source of trade and commerce along the railway line. The late-Victorian timber frame store operated continuously from 1896 until it closed in 2012. In 2014 the store was purchased and became an outpost along the Trail to welcome visitors, celebrate local history, and to advocate for land conservation. Located west along the Trail, the two-story brick Treloar Mercantile Building, once a center of local commerce and trade, served a similar function as the Glosemeyer store. Part of the building was occupied by a bank, which closed during the Great Depression. The bank was replaced by a post office, which operated until the mid-2000s. To bookend the corridor, the founders of Magnificent Missouri purchased both buildings to preserve examples of the region’s German heritage, vernacular architecture, and local construction techniques. Between the two stores, the eight-foot-wide crushed stone bicycle and pedestrian greenway provides expansive views of nearby farmland, offering scenic vistas of creeks, rolling pastures, bottomland fields, and dense deciduous forests. The Glosemeyer General Store was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2018 and the Treloar Mercantile in 2022.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo courtesy Magnificent Missouri



Photo by Michael Kilfoy - Studio X

Hermann

Established in 1838 by the German American Settlement Society, the historic core of the town of Hermann, 80 miles west of St. Louis, includes a concentration of buildings noteworthy as early examples of Missouri German architecture and characteristic of German American community development in Missouri. The Society sold shares to prospective settlers with the intention of founding a German colony in a rural area isolated from other populations and influences, where German language and cultural traditions could be easily preserved. The topography of Missouri’s Gasconade County was thought by the Society to resemble that of the Rhine River Valley and therefore selected for the Society’s colony. Hermann was laid out by the Society in a Philadelphia plan grid with Market Street as its spine, perpendicular to the Missouri River. Beginning with First Street along the river bluff, uniformly sized blocks were constructed progressively inland, at first lined by grand public buildings and elegant homes and later by more modest commercial and residential buildings. Many of the earliest structures were built of brick in Classical Revival styles, though architectural details vary widely. Despite an initially difficult adjustment to the realities of life on the frontier, settlers in Hermann eventually succeeded in establishing a thriving viticulture industry, with most of Hermann’s residents employed in this industry by 1850. The slow but steady economic development of the town, coupled with its intentional cultural isolation, impeded large-scale residential or commercial development, allowing the oldest areas of the community to remain intact. An area six blocks long and four-and-a-half blocks wide, irregularly bordered by Wharf Street, Mozart Street, and Reserve Street, includes more than one hundred historic buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969 as the Hermann Historic District. Included in the district, the Pommer-Gentner House (1848) and adjacent Strehly House and winery (1869) comprise the Deutschheim (“German home”) State Historic Site, with interpretive gardens portraying connections between life and landscape on the frontier.

Category:
Vernacular Landscape

Related Landscapes:
Deutschheim State Historic Site



Photos courtesy Missouri Department of Natural Resources



Photos by Charles A. Birnbaum

Laumeier Sculpture Park



Photo by Barrett Doherty

When Matilda Laumeier bequeathed her 72-acre estate, situated in the southwestern St. Louis suburb of Sunset Hills, to St. Louis County in 1968, she hoped not only to honor the memory of her late husband, Henry Laumeier, but to preserve the general character of the property. She was adamant that the grounds would remain intact, and not be converted to playfields. In 1975 local artist Ernest Trova donated 40 sculptures to the county and the property was chosen as the ideal site to display the works. Trova, along with the county's landscape architect, Armand Brunet, installed the sculptures and the park was dedicated in 1976. Now encompassing 105 acres, the sculpture park presents approximately 70 pieces of large-scale modern and contemporary work. Expansive lawns dotted with specimen trees and sculptures extend south past a group of buildings (both historic and contemporary) clustered near the main entrance. Pedestrians circulate through mowed fields either by following a central, paved, curvilinear path or by wandering across expanses of grass, freely moving from one sculpture to another. To the east, a patch of second growth forest helps screen the curated fields not just from the suburban residences beyond, but from two major highways that converge less than a mile away. A winding, unpaved path traverses the woodland, showcasing sculptures intermittently placed along its edge, while bringing visitors to room-like clearings, each respectively populated with artwork. In the easternmost clearing, visitors come upon a site-specific sculpture by the land art pioneer, Mary Miss. The sculpture, intended to be walked upon, consists of wooden pavilions, platforms, and staircases that both reference and incorporate the historical ruins of a former estate found on site. Other notable site-specific sculptures that blend the boundaries between landscape and sculpture include Beverly Pepper's earthwork, *Cromlech Glen*; Frances Whitehead's *Hortus Obscurus (The Dark Garden)*; Dan Graham's *Triangular Bridge Over Water*; and Jessica Stockholder's *Flooded Chambers Maid*, among others.

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Neighborhood Park

Landscape Style:
Modernist

Designed By:
Armand Brunet
Dan Graham
Mary Miss
Beverly Pepper
Jessica Stockholder
Ernest Trova
Frances Whitehead



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Jefferson Barracks

Historical Name:
Jefferson Barracks Historical Park

Category:
Historic Site

Landscape Types:
Institutional Grounds -
Military Institution
Public Park

Designed By:
Harland Bartholomew & Associates
Emmett Layton
Layton, Layton & Associates

Related Landscapes:
Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery
Mississippi Greenway

In 1826 the United States Army established a military post approximately ten miles south of St. Louis on a high plateau overlooking the Mississippi River. The 1702-acre installation, named for Thomas Jefferson, replaced Fort Belle Fontaine approximately 25 miles to the north. Bolstered by an abundance of on-site resources, the post played a pivotal role in the westward expansion of the United States. By the 1850s a U.S. Army Ordnance Corps occupied the northern portion of the site while the U.S. Cavalry utilized the southern area. In 1863 the Jefferson Barracks Post Cemetery was established, incorporating the site's earlier burial ground. In 1946, the post was deactivated. Soon after, 187 acres were transferred to the Missouri National Guard and 299 acres given to St. Louis County. The county dedicated Jefferson Barracks Historical Park and Sylvan Springs Park in the early 1950s, with the last major addition to the park in 1969.

Today, Jefferson Barracks Park includes significant historic structures, landscape features, and memorials. Several historic buildings house museums, including the Missouri Civil War Museum, the Jefferson Barracks Telephone Museum, the Old Ordnance Room, and the Powder Magazine Museum. The latter is abutted by a patio designed by landscape architect Emmett Layton in 1961, with a bronze memorial added in 2017. The park also includes pavilions, ball fields, and hiking trails that bisect second growth forests and fields.

While much of the historic character of the nearly 70-acre Sylvan Springs Park has been erased, a stone "beverage garden," built by the Sixth infantry in 1939, survives. Covering an acre, it incorporates an existing spring and features retaining walls, an amphitheater, and a small bridge. The Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, south of the parks, now encompasses 310 acres. Jefferson Barracks Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The park serves as the southern terminus of the Mississippi River Greenway.



Photo by Barrett Doherty



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Fort Belle Fontaine

Photo by Barrett Doherty



Situated along the Missouri River at the northern edge of St. Louis, this 305-acre park occupies the former sites of the military encampment Cantonment Belle Fontaine and trading post Fort Belle Fontaine. From 1805, the cantonment consisted of wooden buildings along the low-lying southern bank, until the garrison relocated to higher ground in 1809. Fort Belle Fontaine, eventually composed of 30 buildings and a rectangular palisade, functioned from 1811 to 1828 as an expedition base and site of congregation for Native American, French, Spanish, and American military officers, fur trappers, goods traders, and farmers. Many expeditions departed from the fort for the Louisiana Territory. By 1826 the military abandoned the fort to relocate closer to central St. Louis.

The City of St. Louis acquired the property in 1913 and built a boys home on site. From 1936 to 1940 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) improved the grounds and added visitor amenities, constructing a looping roadway along the edge of the bluff and undulating trails following the park's topography. The WPA framed river views by alternating mature clusters of basswood, burr oak, and chinquapin oak trees with unobstructed knolls of bluestem grasses. In 1938, masonry structures were built, including the Italianate Grand Staircase cascading down to the riverbank, with integral fountains, reflecting pools, and terraces added. Many of these structures have now fallen into ruin but can be seen from the three-mile-long trail along the Missouri and Coldwater Creeks. St. Louis County acquired the property in 1986 and created a county park, with a small parcel set aside for use by the Missouri Division of Youth Services. Fort Belle Fontaine was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.

Categories:
Designed Landscape
Historic Site

Landscape Type:
Public Park

Related Landscapes:
Lewis and Clark National
Historic Trail



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site

Category:
Historic Site

Landscape Types:
Garden and Estate
Public Park -
National Park

In 1820 Frederick Dent acquired the 141-acre 'White Haven' estate, located thirteen miles southwest of St. Louis. The property featured a vernacular antebellum home surrounded by fruit trees and outbuildings. Dent turned the property into a slave plantation and expanded it to include 862 acres. Future President Ulysses S. Grant, then a soldier at nearby Jefferson Barracks, met Julia Dent at White Haven in 1844 and the couple married in 1848. They lived at White Haven for five years until Grant reenlisted in the army to serve in the American Civil War. In 1866 Grant purchased parts of the property and established a commercial farm and horse breeding operation. Amid an increasingly volatile economy, Grant sold off livestock in 1875 before losing the estate outright in 1885, just three months before his death. Albert Wenzlick acquired the property in 1913 and passed it to his son Delbert in 1940. The Wenzlicks sold much of the surrounding land but maintained the historic integrity of the estate's core. Delbert passed away in 1979, leaving the future of the estate unclear. After years of public engagement and fundraising by local advocates, the 9.6-acre property was acquired by a joint venture between the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and St. Louis County. Centuries of agricultural use significantly altered the topography of the site. The preserved home currently overlooks a relatively flat, shady lawn enclosed by a wooden slat fence. Stone walkways lead to the main house and outbuildings, including a stable designed by Grant that serves as a visitor center. Hundreds of historical trees, including black oak, dawn redwood, flowering dogwood, ginkgo, pecan, and sweetgum, are spread throughout the property. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1979) and later declared a National Historic Landmark (1985). In 1989 White Haven became a National Historic Site and remains managed by the National Park Service.



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Photos by Barrett Doherty

Weldon Spring

Located 30 miles west of St. Louis, this site encompasses a remediated, former industrial operation. The U.S. Army's Weldon Spring Ordnance Works manufactured trinitrotoluene (TNT) and dinitrotoluene (DNT) from 1941 to 1945, contaminating soil and groundwater. The Ordnance Works stopped production at the end of World War II and the Army transferred 7,920 acres to the University of Missouri, which used the land as an agricultural experiment station. The Missouri Department of Conservation purchased 7,200 acres from the university in 1978 to create the Weldon Spring Conservation Area. The conservation area currently includes 8,397 acres of forests, glades, wetlands, and cropland. In 1956 the Army transferred 205 acres to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), which established a chemical plant to process uranium. Though operations ended in 1966, the on-site quarry was used as a disposal area for waste and tainted materials until 1969. In the late 1980s, the quarry and area occupied by the chemical plant were placed on the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERLA) National Priorities List as a Superfund site. The remediation process that followed concluded in 2001 and the adjacent interpretive center that communicates the site's history, remediation effort, and current conditions opened the following year. One of the site's highest points is the location of the 75-foot-tall disposal cell, which features an observation platform. Accessed by a crushed gravel walkway and staircase on its southeast side, its exterior is composed of a mixture of cobbles that transition from white to gray. In the warmer months, its austere hue contrasts with the verdant, 150-acre Howell Prairie that surrounds it. The restored prairie, established by the Department of Energy, is planted with more than 100 native plant species that were present prior to European settlement. A wide, one-mile-long path surrounds the cell, offering views of the prairie. The six-mile-long Hamburg Trail connects the site with surrounding trails and parks, including Katy Trail State Park and the Weldon Spring Conservation Area.

Category:
Historic Site

Landscape Type:
Public Park -
Scenic Reservation

Designed By:
Missouri Department of Conservation
U.S. Department of Energy

Related Landscapes:
Katy Trail



Photos by Barrett Doherty

Cahokia Mounds

Categories:

Ethnographic Landscape
Historic Site

Landscape Types:

Public Park -
State Park

Situated eight miles northeast of St. Louis, this 2,200-acre Illinois state park is located on land once home to the largest settlement of the pre-Columbian Mississippian culture. This central gathering site originally covered 4,000 acres and boasted a population of 10,000 to 20,000 in its center, with 40,000 to 50,000 individuals residing in Greater Cahokia, composed of additional sites in modern-day St. Louis and East St. Louis. Ridgetop mounds defined the limits of the city, with other earthworks featuring plateaued and conical peaks that designated their residential, civic, agricultural, religious, and commercial usages. The present-day site includes 51 mounds, while historical records indicate that there were more than 100 earthworks in use between AD 1000 and AD 1350. The 100-foot-high Monks Mound is Cahokia's central earthwork. Constructed in fourteen stages to ultimately encompass fifteen acres, it is the largest indigenous earthen structure north of central Mexico. Some other features were constructed with wood, including an astronomical observatory for solar tracking. A portion of the site contains a reconstruction of a defensive palisade, which is estimated to have encircled much of the site during its population peak from 1000-1350. Supplementing the visitor experience, an Interpretive Center was designed by Booker Associates and opened in 1989. Sited in the eastern side of the park, this contemporary structure hosts archeological exhibitions of artifacts found in the mounds and historical recreations based on these findings. The state of Illinois created a state park to protect and interpret the mounds in 1923. The site came under threat from federal highway development in the 1950s, when an interstate highway was constructed through the Cahokia Creek floodplain. To protect the site from further encroachment, the mounds were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964. The Cahokia Mounds were named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982.

Photo by Barrett Doherty



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All photos by The Cultural Landscape Foundation, unless otherwise noted.

Left: Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum Cover: Photo by Jon Dickson