

Historic Preservation Report For the

**National Museum Of  
African American History and Culture**

District of Columbia

Final Report

Prepared For:

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
Office of Planning and Project Management  
600 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20013

Prepared by:

Robinson & Associates  
1909 Q Street, NW Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
202.234.2333

July 2007



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
METHODOLOGY	6
HISTORIC CONTEXT	
Summary	7
The L'Enfant Plan (1791)	8
Picturesque Development of the Mall and Monument Grounds (1831-1865)	16
Post-Civil War Improvements (1871-1890s)	21
The McMillan (Senate Park Commission) Plan and its Implementation (1901-1940s)	28
Post-World War II Development (1945-Present)	46
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	
Significant Resources	56
Views and Vistas	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
APPENDIX	
A. Significant Resources Maps	
Plan of the City of Washington: Contributing Streets, Reservations, and Appropriations	A-1
Historic Districts and Contributing Properties	A-2
Individually Listed Historic Properties	A-3





## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Benjamin Banneker, a self-taught astronomer of African descent and one of the few free blacks living in the vicinity (Junior League of Washington, *An Illustrated History: The City of Washington*, 1977).
2. “Plan of the City Intended for the Permanent Seat of the Government of the United States,” facsimile of a manuscript by Peter Charles L’Enfant in the Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, 1887 (Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).
3. “Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia, ceded by the States of Virginia and Maryland to the United States of America, and by them established as the Seat of their Government , after the Year MDCCC,” engraving by Thackara and Vallance, Philadelphia, 1792 (Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).
4. Detail of “Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia,” engraving by Thackara and Vallance, Philadelphia, 1792 (Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).
5. “Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia,” engraved by Samuel Hill, Boston, 1792. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).
6. “Design for the National University,” by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1816 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).
7. “Plan of the Mall,” by Robert Mills, 1841 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).
8. “Washington Monument as it Stood for 25 years,” by Matthew Brady (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-BH823-2A).
9. “Plan Showing Proposed Method of Laying out the Public Grounds at Washington,” by Andrew Jackson Downing, 1851, copy by N. Michler, 1867 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).
10. Proposed improvements to the northwest corner of Washington Monument site, 1863 (NARA, RG 79, NCP807\_8400, copy located in Robinson & Assoc. “Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds.” June 10, 2002).
11. “The City of Washington: Birds-Eye View from the Potomac,” published by Currier & Ives, New York, 1892 (Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*.)
12. “Plan for Strengthening the Foundation of the Washington Monument” Designed by Lt. Col. Casey, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A., 1879 (NARA, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, copy located in Robinson & Assoc. “Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds.” June 10, 2002).

13. "Altograph of Washington City, or, Strangers' Guide" by James t. DuBois, 1892 (Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).
14. "Plan for the Improvement of the West Side of Monument Park," 1901-05 (National Archives, RG 79, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission, NCP 807\_84053, copy located in Robinson & Associates, Robinson & Assoc. "Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds." June 10, 2002).
15. "Map of the District of Columbia," 1901 (No. D-99. Prepared by the Sub-Committee on the Improvement of the Park System, Washington, D.C.).
16. "The Mall: The McMillan Plan, 1901" Senate Park Commission, 1901.
17. "Plan showing Proposed Treatment of Monument Garden," Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).
18. "View in the Monument Garden, Looking Toward the White House," Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).
19. "View of the Monument and Terraces from the White House," Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).
20. "Diagram of a Portion of City Showing Proposed Sites for Future Public Building" Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02.
21. "The Mall and Vicinity: Buildings Occupied by Various Government Activities," 1917. Prepared by the Public Buildings Commission under the direction of Colonel W.W. Harts and Colonel C.S. Ridley, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission).
22. Aerial showing Washington Monument Grounds, n.d. (National Archives, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission)
23. "The Mall, Central Area, Study for Development," National Capital Planning Commission, 1928 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1771-1991*).
24. "Proposed Plan for the Setting of the Washington Monument," William A. Delano, 1932 (National Archives, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, NCP 807\_84095, copy located in Robinson & Assoc. "Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds." June 10, 2002).
25. "Informal Scheme Study," Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Henry Hubbard, 1932. (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1771-1991*).
26. "Progress Plan for National Capital Parks Monument in the Central Area," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1936 (National Archives, RG 79,

Records of the National Park Service, NCP 807\_84198, copy located at Robinson & Assoc. "Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds." June 10, 2002).

27. "Study for Development," National Capital Planning Commission, 1939. (National Archives, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission).
28. "Plan of Proposed Independence Ave. Extension Structures west of 14<sup>th</sup> Street," District of Columbia Department of Highways, 24 March 1942 (copy located at Robinson & Assoc. "Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds." June 10, 2002).
29. "Plan for Development, Washington Monument Grounds," Thomas C. Jeffers, 1948 (Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1771-1991*).
30. "Public Buildings in the Metropolitan Area of Washington, D.C." Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration, n.d. (National Archives, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission).
31. Aerial view of "tempos" on the western portion of the Washington Monument Grounds, 1943 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USZ62-132352).
32. View from Washington Monument, Farm Security Administration, Office of War Information Collection, 1945 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USW31-058719-C).



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Historic Preservation Report is to evaluate potential effects of the Smithsonian Institution's new National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) on the selected site – a prominent knoll bounded by Constitution Avenue on the north, 14th Street on the east, 15<sup>th</sup> Street on the west, and Madison Avenue on the south – as required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) and its implementing regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 800). The new museum constitutes a federal undertaking as defined in the rules and regulations governing federal protection of historic properties (36 CFR 800 §16). As detailed in 36 CFR §800.8, compliance with Section 106 for the NMAAHC project is being executed in coordination with an Environmental Impact Statement which is prepared in accordance with the implementing regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Public Law 108-184, “The National Museum of African American History and Culture Act” established the museum and authorized the Smithsonian Board of Regents to select one of four sites in Washington, D.C. The Monument Site, as described above, was selected on January 30, 2006. Therefore, neither the choice of the site nor the decision to build is addressed in this report, nor does Section 106 review address the implementation of these prior decisions.

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) will serve as joint-lead agencies for Section 106 review. The Smithsonian Institution is not a Federal agency automatically subject to Section 106 review; however its projects in the National Capital Region are subject to review by NCPC, which is a Federal agency under the National Capital Planning Act of 1952. Under Public Law 108-72, the Smithsonian is obligated to carry out Section 106 compliance only for its projects in the District of Columbia requiring NCPC review.

Public Law 108-184 required the Federal agency in administrative control of the NMAAHC site to transfer control of the site to the Smithsonian as soon as practicable. As the site is currently managed by the National Park Service (NPS), the Smithsonian and NCPC invited the NPS to be a cooperating agency for purposes of Section 106 review.

## METHODOLOGY

Due to the prominent location of the NMAAHC site, an abundance of documentation of the National Mall as well as the Washington Monument Grounds currently exists. This Historic Preservation Report synthesizes a vast amount of data into a single report aimed at informing Section 106 review of the NMAAHC site. Extensive additional resources are found in the comprehensive bibliography located at the end of the report.

The historic context and development chronology produced for this report draws a great deal of content from existing research and documentation conducted by Robinson & Associates (including National Register nominations for “The Plan of the City of Washington” (the L’Enfant and McMillan plans), “East and West Potomac Parks,” and “The Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site”). In addition, multiple other secondary sources were consulted including a draft *Washington Monument Grounds Cultural Landscape Report* compiled by John Milner & Associates for the National Park Service (research conducted by Robinson & Associates), National Register of Historic Places nominations, the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, HABS/HAER documents, National Park Service cultural landscape reports and inventories, Smithsonian Institution files and reports pertaining to the NMAAHC site selection process, as well as numerous secondary sources addressing the history of Washington, D.C. and its monumental core.

In addition, Robinson & Associates conducted extensive primary research to supplement existing studies on the National Mall and Monument Grounds to include site-specific maps, photographs, and documentation. The repositories visited include: the National Capital Planning Commission; the National Archives and Records Administration; the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.; the Library of Congress’ Prints and Photographs and Geography divisions; the Olmsted Archives in Boston, Massachusetts; and the New York Historical Society’s McKim, Mead & White collection.

A large area of focus for this study was historical records related to the rich African American experience in the District of Columbia. This experience is detailed in numerous scholarly studies, National Register of Historic Places documentation, and city initiatives, such as the African American Heritage Trail, historic districts nominations detailing thriving African American communities within the city, and ongoing research that incorporates the history of slavery into the broader context of building the Nation’s Capital. The resources examined by Robinson & Associates for this purpose are listed in the comprehensive bibliography at the end of the study. Although there is a substantial growing body of research on the significance of African American contributions to the city, there are still major record groups that are being explored. The results of this labor-intensive scholarship, when available in the future, will add valuable detail to the already growing historic record of African American contributions to the city’s abundance of historic resources.

Finally, this report is intended to be read in conjunction with the Louis Berger Group’s archaeological report entitled, *Preliminary Archaeological Investigation for the National Museum of African American Culture and History* – supplementing, rather than repeating its content.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

### *Summary*

The site selected for the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is historically linked with the development of the monumental core of the Nation's Capital. Specifically, it is located in the northeast corner of the Washington Monument Grounds, which as a whole is bounded by Constitution Avenue, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Wallenberg Place, East Basin Drive and 17<sup>th</sup> Street, in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C. The Monument Grounds is a distinct area, assigned Reservation no. 2 (original Appropriation no. 3) in the National Park Service's current reservation numbering system. The grounds are characterized by a prominent knoll upon which the Washington Monument is located. Comprising approximately 92 acres, the Monument Grounds has evolved from its initial survey and planned use under the plan of Peter (Pierre) Charles L'Enfant (1791), to major changes proposed in the McMillan (Senate Park) Commission Plan (1901-02), and subsequent plans such as the Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill Plan (1965) – with degrees of implementation throughout site's history.

The historic plan of the city of Washington is the foremost example in the United States of two combined nationally significant city planning ideals – the Baroque and the City Beautiful. At the center of the plans are ceremonial parks and greenswards that form the seat of the national government. The historic urban footprint is established by a Baroque structure of radiating avenues connecting topographically elevated points, mostly diagonal but some orthogonal to the axes of the compass. Superimposed on this structure is a grid of regular orthogonal streets designated numerically and alphabetically within four quadrants, with the U.S. Capitol serving as the declared center point. The plan for the national capital, originally designed by L'Enfant in 1791, was developed throughout the nineteenth century and substantially amplified in 1901-02 by the McMillan Commission (officially, the Senate Park Commission).

Much of the city's current character can be attributed to the original plans envisioned by L'Enfant and McMillan; however the Washington Monument Grounds, and particularly the NMAAHC site, evolved much more organically over time. Decades of planning have left the NMAAHC site a virtually untouched part of the greensward situated within the larger monumental core. The current landscape of the Washington Monument Grounds is a reflection of the site's character that emerged in the late nineteenth-to early twentieth-century. The Washington Monument Grounds, contained historically for many years on the western end by the Tiber Creek and on the north by the Washington City Canal, experienced a unique expansion that affected major northern and western areas of the Monument Grounds. Between 1882 and 1900, the tidal flats west and south of the Washington Monument were reclaimed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Because the NMAAHC site is located on what was originally solid ground rather than fill, it has remained relatively undisturbed in comparison to the rest of the grounds throughout the development history.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Early grounds development is discussed further in the preceding report, *Preliminary Archaeological Investigation for the National Museum of African American History and Culture*, prepared by the Louis Berger Group.

Throughout its history, the Washington Monument Grounds has been a public space for recreation, leisure activities, and social gatherings, and has served as a backdrop for parades, protests, and rallies. Since the first documented “march on Washington” in 1894, millions of people have gathered in what has become a national public space centered on the National Mall, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the U.S. Capitol grounds.<sup>2</sup> Marion Anderson’s 1939 concert at the Lincoln Memorial is a prominent example of the symbolic and powerful presence of Washington’s monumental core. The Washington Monument Grounds holds a key position in first amendment demonstrations and served as the initial gathering spot for participants in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Marchers assembled on the Grounds and proceeded to the Lincoln Memorial where speeches were heard by protest leaders, including Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech.<sup>3</sup>

The Washington Monument Grounds is the central focus of the in the great cross axis between the White House the White House and Jefferson Memorial, and the Capitol and Lincoln Memorial, set within the expansive *tapis verte* that defines the National Mall. An overarching theme within the Monument Grounds consistently relies on the concept of the area as an open lawn surrounding the monument with trees and plantings at its periphery. The site’s formal development began in 1790 with an initial survey conducted by L’Enfant and the resulting plans thereafter. L’Enfant’s plan was magnified and expanded in accordance with the framework established by the McMillan Commission during the early decades of the twentieth century with the reclamation of land for waterfront parks, parkways, an improved and extended Mall, and new monuments and vistas. The Monument Grounds contains a number of smaller-scale historic and non- historic features that as a whole fit within the overall sense of open space: one of a set of Bulfinch Gateposts, the Sylvan Theater (1917-61), the Survey Lodge (1886), Memorial Lodge (1888), the Jefferson Pier Marker (1889), and the German-American Friendship Garden (1888), as well as several recent and/or temporary visitor facilities. More than two hundred years since the design of the L’Enfant Plan, and a century after the McMillan Plan, the integrity of the unified plan of Washington is largely unimpaired – boasting a legally enforced building height restriction, landscaped parks, wide avenues, and open space allowing designed vistas.<sup>4</sup>

### *The L’Enfant Plan (1791)*

The original comprehensive plan of Washington, D.C. was designed by Peter (Pierre) Charles L’Enfant in 1791 as the site of the Federal City. The District of Columbia was largely undeveloped at this time and gave the city’s founders a unique opportunity to create an entirely new capital city. Andrew Ellicott (1754-1820) and Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) surveyed a square, measuring ten miles on each side and encompassing the forks of the Potomac River and

---

<sup>2</sup> Lucy Barber, *Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Barber, 141.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson & Associates, Inc., National Historic Landmark-Nomination Form, “Plan of the City of Washington” (draft) Washington, D.C.: January 4, 2001. Updates and amends Sara Amy Leach and Elizabeth Barthold, National Register of Historic Places-Register Form, “L’Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, D.C.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 24, 1997), 44.



its Eastern Branch, the Anacostia. The south cornerstone of the Federal territory was formally installed at Jones Point in Alexandria, Virginia, on April 15, 1791, a site chosen specifically by George Washington as the starting point of the survey; 39 others were subsequently placed at one-mile intervals along the boundaries. Emplacements of the 40 stones were based on celestial calculations by Banneker, a self-taught astronomer and mathematician of African descent and one of few free blacks living in the vicinity (Figure 1). Credited as “the first black man of science,” Banneker was a logical choice for Ellicott in 1791 for his knowledge of astronomy and previous experience in mathematical calculations.<sup>5</sup> After surveying the site, L’Enfant developed a plan that featured ceremonial spaces and grand radial avenues while respecting the natural contours of land. L’Enfant’s original drawings and manuscript from 1791 were never engraved and have since become almost illegible. A facsimile of the manuscript and drawings was completed by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1887 and details the system of streets and open space as envisioned by L’Enfant (Figure 2).<sup>6</sup> Pamela Scott suggests in “This Vast Empire, The Iconography of the Mall, 1791-1848,” that although L’Enfant’s major planning principles for Washington, D.C., were based on French tradition, the planner’s intent was to create a city that was truly American. The framework within which the city was planned was grounded in the Washington and Jefferson’s aspirations and resulted in an aesthetic that was a synthesis of meaningful American symbols.<sup>7</sup> The resulting plan was a system of orthogonal streets with intersecting diagonal avenues radiating from the two most significant buildings sites – the Capitol and the White House.<sup>8</sup> In L’Enfant’s plan, open spaces were as integral to the capital as the buildings to be erected around them. The President’s House and gardens were intended to stand on high ground near the western end of the city and overlook the Tiber Creek and Potomac River beyond. The Capitol was planned for Jenkin’s Hill, with a public walk linking the presidential house and grounds with the Capitol building.<sup>9</sup> This “grand avenue” was to be approximately a mile in length, 400 feet in width and terminating at “Monument A,” an equestrian statue dedicated to George Washington – this concept subsequently became the current Washington Monument. The tree-lined avenue would have spacious houses and gardens bordering its edges that would terminate in a slope on either side.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 49; During his time surveying the District of Columbia, Banneker completed calculations for his almanac (published later in 1795) that included information about the tides, moon, sun, and crops in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. His almanac was popular for nearly a decade after its publication. See, Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), xii, 18-21.

<sup>6</sup> John W. Reps, *Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 21-22.

<sup>7</sup> See Scott’s discussion of French planning principles as they relate to the plan for Washington, D.C., in Pamela Scott, “This Vast Empire: The Iconography of the Mall, 1791-1848,” in *The Mall in Washington 1791-1991*, ed. Richard Longstreth (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), 43-46.

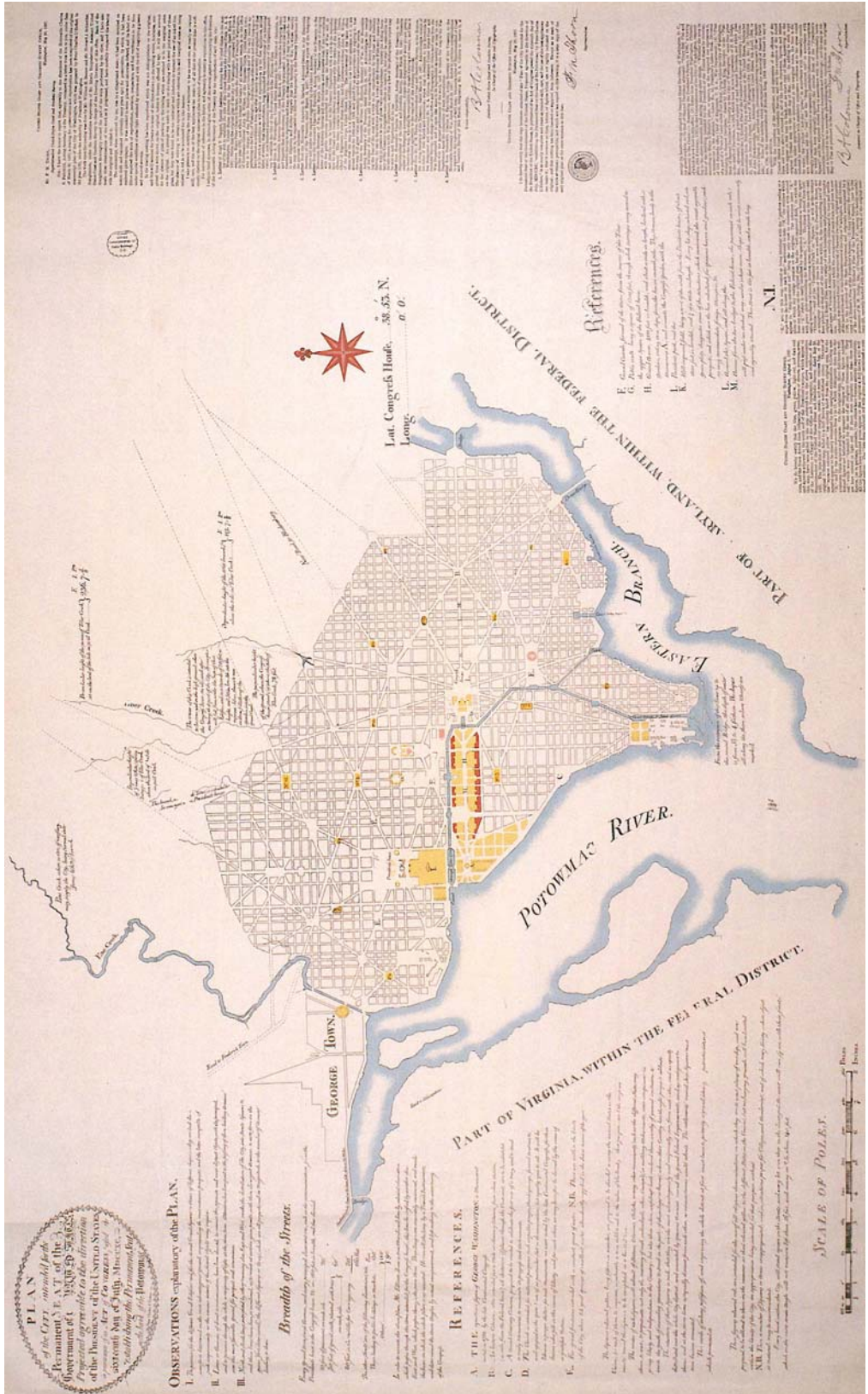
<sup>8</sup> Robinson & Associates, Inc., “Plan of the City of Washington,” 49-50.

<sup>9</sup> Reps, *Monumental Washington*, 16-17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 21.



**Figure 1:** Benjamin Banneker, a self-taught astronomer of African descent and one of few free blacks living in the vicinity (Junior League of Washington, *An Illustrated History: The City of Washington*, 1977).



**Figure 2:** The original comprehensive plan of Washington, D.C. was designed by Peter (Pierre) Charles L'Enfant in 1791 as the site of the Federal City. L'Enfant's original drawings and manuscript from 1791 were never engraved and have since become almost illegible. This facsimile of the manuscript and drawings was completed by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1887 and details the system of streets and open space as envisioned by L'Enfant. The resulting plan was a system of orthogonal streets with intersecting diagonal avenues radiating from the two most significant buildings sites – the Capitol and the White House – detailed as “I” and “L” in this drawing. The President’s House and gardens were intended to stand on high ground near the western end of the city and overlook the Tiber Creek and Potomac River beyond. The Capitol was planned for Jenkin’s Hill, with a public walk linking the presidential house and grounds with the Capitol building. This “grand avenue” was to be approximately a mile in length, 400 feet in width and terminating at “Monument A,” an equestrian statue dedicated to George Washington – this concept subsequently became the current Washington Monument. (“Plan of the City Intended for the Permanent Seat of the Government of the United States.” Facsimile of a manuscript by Peter Charles L'Enfant in the Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, 1887. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).

The Mall was intended as the focus of economic and cultural life in the city and would become a meeting place not only for residents of the city, but also the country and the world.<sup>11</sup> An integral feature to the city's prosperity was L'Enfant's plan for a canal that would channel the Tiber creek along the present position of Constitution Avenue and turn south near the Capitol Grounds to connect the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. The scale and complexity of the canal in the 1791-92 plan suggested its importance within the grand design of the city with important structures located along its banks – the proposed National Pantheon, Judiciary Square, a market/exchange complex, a national bank and theater, as well as a grand church complex.<sup>12</sup> This portion of his plan was partially realized in 1815; however poor construction of the canal left it virtually useless for trade as envisioned by L'Enfant.<sup>13</sup>

Disagreements between L'Enfant and original commissioners on the appropriate execution of land purchases for the city prompted George Washington to relieve L'Enfant of his position. Stripped of his power, L'Enfant refused to supply the commissioners with his manuscript and drawings, and Andrew Ellicott was engaged to produce a set of maps based on L'Enfant's notes and his own memory. Ellicott's 1792 engraving, *Plan of the City of Washington*, followed closely to L'Enfant's original scheme with a few minor changes: the elimination of L'Enfant's name from the maps and the abandonment of a comprehensive labels for the treatment of the city's open spaces (Figure 3).<sup>14</sup> A detail of the 1792 map shows the configuration of the planned monumental core with a tree-lined avenue connecting the Capitol and President's house with a site at the western terminus for the (unlabeled) monument to George Washington. Also shown in the early plans were footprints of buildings intended to house foreign ministries on the perimeter of the tree-lined greensward (Figure 4). Although Ellicott made the above noted deletions, he also included additional information that was not provided by L'Enfant. In order to delineate the blocks that would be available for public sale, Ellicott consecutively numbered lots denoted for private development (Figure 5). The 1792 *Plan of Washington* map produced by Samuel Hill of Boston denotes the nearly triangular parcel of land south of the canal between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets (now the north part of the current site for NMAAHC) as part of the larger public reservation that encompassed the Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, and President's House and gardens. In 1793 a wooden marker, the Jefferson Pier, was placed at the intersection of the cross axis of the White House and the Capitol.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Scott, 40-41.

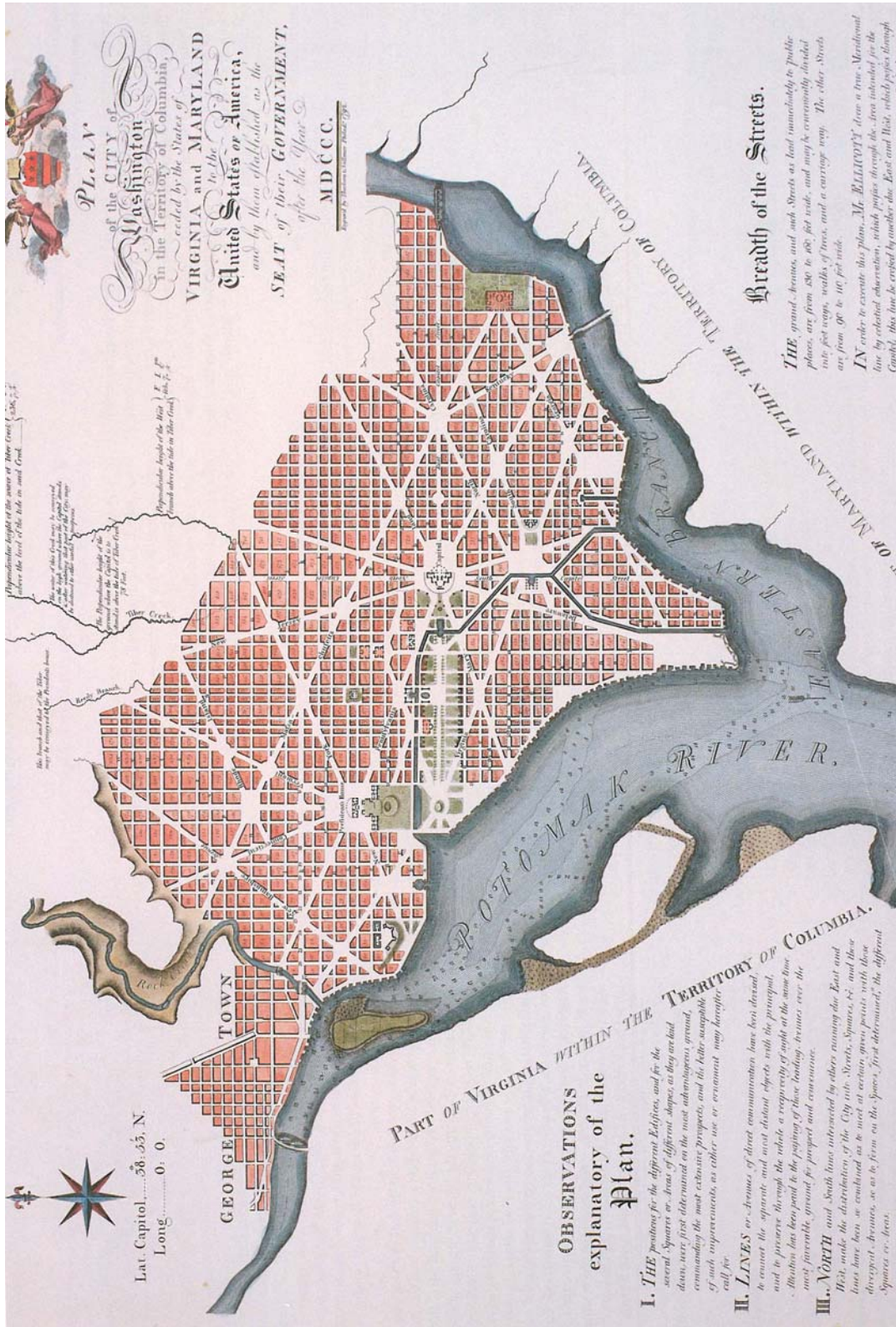
<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>13</sup> Reps, *Monumental Washington*, 17-18; John Milner Associates, Inc., "Washington Monument and Grounds Cultural Landscape Report" [Initial Draft], prepared for the National Park Service Denver Service Center, National Capital Region, 2003, chapter 2, p.4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Robinson & Associates, "The Plan of the City of Washington," 50-51; Historic American Building Survey (HABS), L'Enfant-McMillan Plan of Washington, D.C., No. DC-668, by Elizabeth J. Barthold, ed., Sara Amy Leach (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1993), 7.

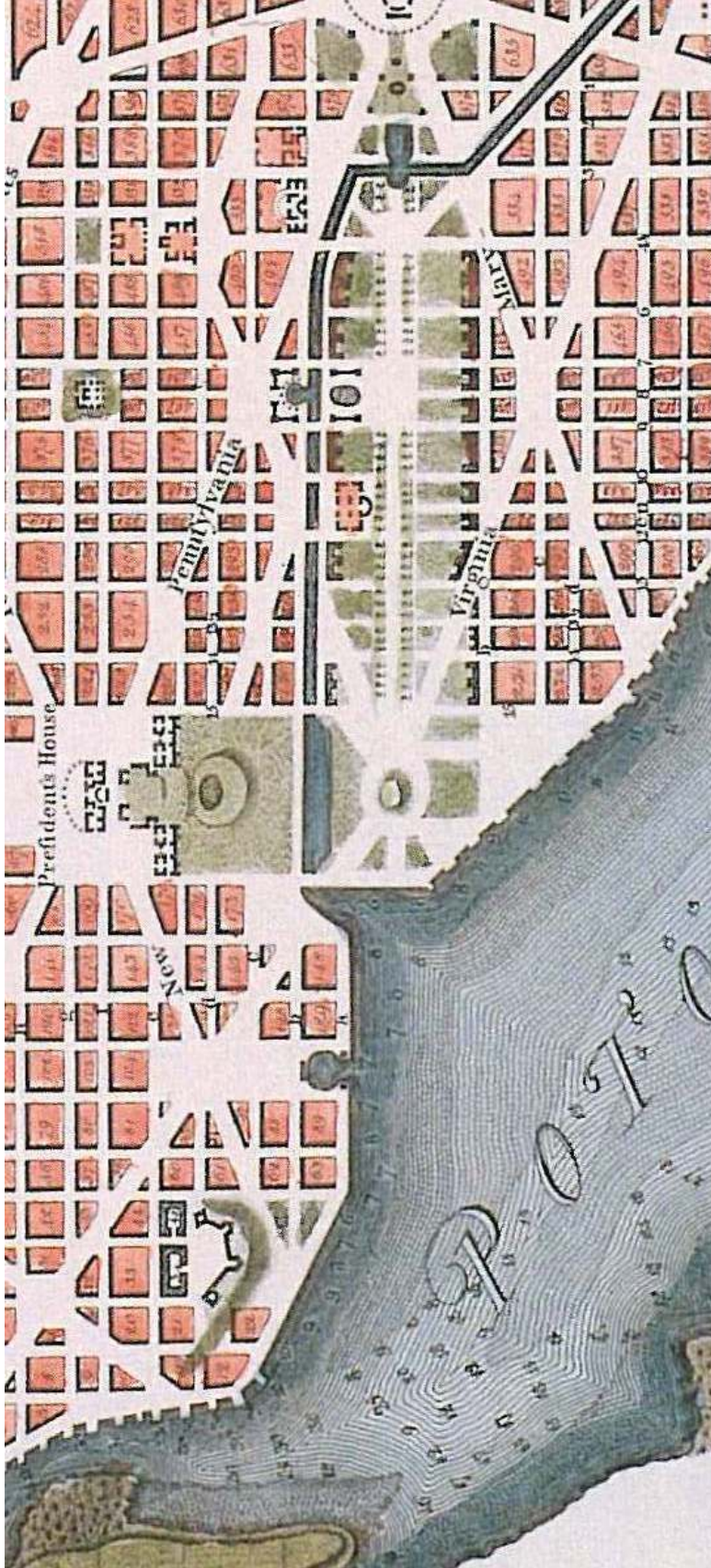
<sup>15</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 6.





**Figure 3:** This map was the first publication of Andrew Elllicott's Plan, *Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia*, engraved by Thackara and Vallance of Philadelphia in 1792. Elllicott's engraving followed closely to L'Enfant's original scheme with a few minor changes; the elimination of L'Enfant's name from the maps and the abandonment of a comprehensive directive for the treatment of the city's open spaces. ("Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia, ceded by the States of Virginia and Maryland to the United States of America, and by them established as the Seat of their Government, after the Year MDCCCL." Engraving by Thackara and Vallance, Philadelphia, 1792. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).





**Figure 4:** A detail of the Ellicott's 1792 map shows the configuration of the planned monumental core with a tree-lined avenue connecting the Capitol and President's House with a mounded site at the terminus for a monument to George Washington. Also shown in the early plans were footprints of buildings intended to house foreign ministries on the perimeter of the tree-lined greensward. One such footprint occurs on the current NMAAHC site. ("Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia." Engraving by Thackara and Vallance, Philadelphia, 1792. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).



**Figure 5:** The 1792 *Plan of Washington* map produced by Samuel Hill denotes an early triangular parcel of land south of the canal between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets (now the north part of the current site for NMAAHC) as part of the larger public reservation that encompassed the Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, and President’s House and gardens. In order to delineate the blocks that would be available for public sale, Ellicott consecutively numbered lots denoted for private development. In this plan, Indiana Avenue, later obscured by the Federal Triangle, runs diagonally into the east side of the Monument Grounds. (“Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia.” Engraved by Samuel Hill, Boston, 1792. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).

Following L'Enfant's dismissal, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson continued with the original plan and purchased 541 acres that would be divided into 17 parcels for federal buildings and monumental spaces. Original Appropriation nos.1-3 encompassed the monumental core of the city, which was intended as the grand boulevard to connect the Capitol Building to the President's house. Appropriation no. 1 consisted of the White House Grounds and Ellipse; Appropriation no. 2 spanned from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 14<sup>th</sup> Street to complete the Capitol Grounds and the Mall; and Appropriation no. 3 delineated the area south of the Tiber Creek between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets as the (unlabeled) site for the equestrian statue of George Washington.<sup>16</sup> While often considered part of the Mall, Appropriation no. 3 (current Reservation no. 2) is a distinct area that has always been a separate entity (with variations in its exact configuration, as detailed below).

### *Picturesque Development of the Mall and Monument Grounds (1831-1861)*

A great deal of the government's efforts in the years following the initial L'Enfant and Ellicott plan focused on improving and grading the most heavily used streets, tree planting along the avenues, and improving the area around federal property within the 17 designated reservations. Much of this time and money during the early years following the 1791-92 plan was designated for President's Park and the Capitol Grounds. In 1804 a 13-foot-tall pier erected on the banks of the Washington canal (at the intersection of the axes of the White House and Capitol) to replace the first wooden marker from 1793.<sup>17</sup>

The northernmost section of President's Park (now Lafayette Square) was first landscaped as a separate park in 1824, while the expansive tract of land that comprised the Mall was divided into sections by the crossing of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Most of the area located south of the canal was undesirable and received little attention in the early nineteenth century. In 1812, Congress began leasing portions of the Mall to private owners for the use of storage, gardens and livestock grazing.<sup>18</sup> Noting the undesirability of the area, Benjamin Latrobe submitted a plan to Congress in 1815 that would utilize land south of the newly completed canal as a "picturesque aesthetic with meandering paths and naturalistic water elements." The following year he also submitted plans for a National University between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets, encompassing part of the Washington Monument reservation (Figure 6). Lack of funding ultimately dismissed both of his proposals.<sup>19</sup>

By 1829 the Capitol building was complete and an overwhelming sense of optimism in the city spurred a great number of improvements on the Mall. In 1831, Robert Mills was hired to redesign and improve the city canal. This plan divided the mall into segments while maintaining

---

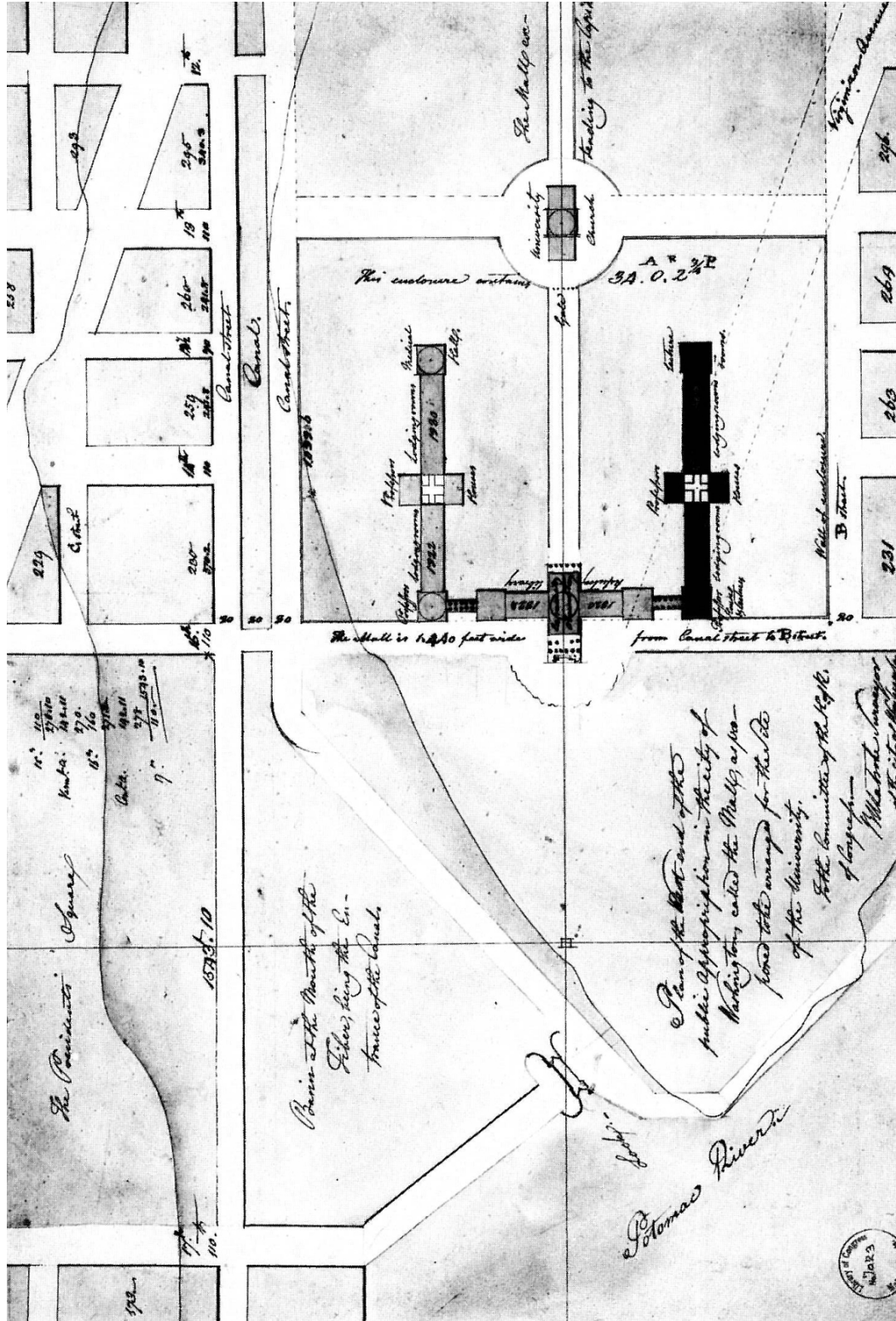
<sup>16</sup> Robinson & Associates, "Plan of the City of Washington," 53-54.

<sup>17</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> HABS, National Mall and Monument Grounds (Reservation Numbers 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 4, 5, 6, 6A), No. DC-687, by Elizabeth J. Barthold (Washington, D.C.: 1993), 5-6; HABS, L'Enfant-McMillan Plan, 10-12.

<sup>19</sup> Latrobe's 1816 plan indicates the portion of the Washington City Canal that had been constructed at that date.





**Figure 6:** Benjamin Latrobe's design for the National University on the Mall (1816) shows the condition of the NMAAHC site as being partially covered by the canal and the northwest Washington Monument Grounds covered by a "basin at the mouth of the Tiber, being the entrance of the Canal." Noting the undesirability of the area south of the newly completed canal, Benjamin Latrobe submitted a plan to Congress in 1815 that would utilize the land as a "picturesque aesthetic with meandering paths and naturalistic water elements" (Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "Design for the National University," 1816, Library of Congress, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).

the axial relationship between the Capitol and the proposed equestrian statue to honor George Washington. By the 1840s, Washington developed a more economically stable base, and attention to the city's monumental core became a priority to the government. The first two major projects on the Mall's public grounds were the construction of the Smithsonian Institution and grounds and the Washington Monument.<sup>20</sup> In 1841, Mills produced a plan intended for the Smithsonian Institution between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets south edge of the Mall, but also included a proposal for landscaping the entire area between the Capitol and Potomac River (Figure 7). Plans for the Washington Monument Grounds indicate a large, circular monument to George Washington, surrounded by English picturesque gardens with meandering paths and a variety of trees and shrubs clustered throughout the walks.<sup>21</sup>

In 1833 the Washington National Monument Society was founded by Chief Justice John Marshall and James Madison to build a monument dedicated to George Washington. By 1836 the society had raised \$28,000 for their cause and held a design competition for a monument located within Reservation no. 3 as designated by L'Enfant in 1791. Although an equestrian statue was cited as the appropriate monument, Robert Mills' winning design was a 600-foot-tall obelisk surrounded by a colonnaded rotunda. In 1848, construction of the Washington Monument began, but was halted in 1854 due to lack of funds (Figure 8). Tensions leading up to the Civil War prevented further fundraising, and construction did not begin again until 1878. In addition to this setback, the Monument itself was constructed off-axis with the President's House and Capitol, sitting about 370 feet east and 123 feet south of the axes' intersection. This is likely due to the fact that the Monument Grounds at the time of construction encompassed a much smaller land mass than at present and extensive filling would have been necessary to provide stable ground for the foundations.<sup>22</sup> However, from the conception of the Washington Monument by Mills in 1833 to the beginning of its construction in 1848, plans for landscaping the Smithsonian grounds and the entire Mall as a picturesque landscape were also in the forefront. The idea that the Washington Monument would become an integral part of the larger picturesque garden on the Mall perhaps was perhaps also justification for its placement off-axis, counter to L'Enfant's directive.<sup>23</sup>

Noted landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing was employed by Commission of Public Buildings and the President to inspect the city's public grounds and envision a new plan for the Mall in 1850. Downing accepted the commission with the wish to provide a "good example of a *real* park in the United States." His preeminence as a landscape architect who advocated agrarian virtues was reflected in his plans for the Mall. Downing's design for the Mall were similar to Mills' in that the entire span of public grounds provided a series of gardens that were

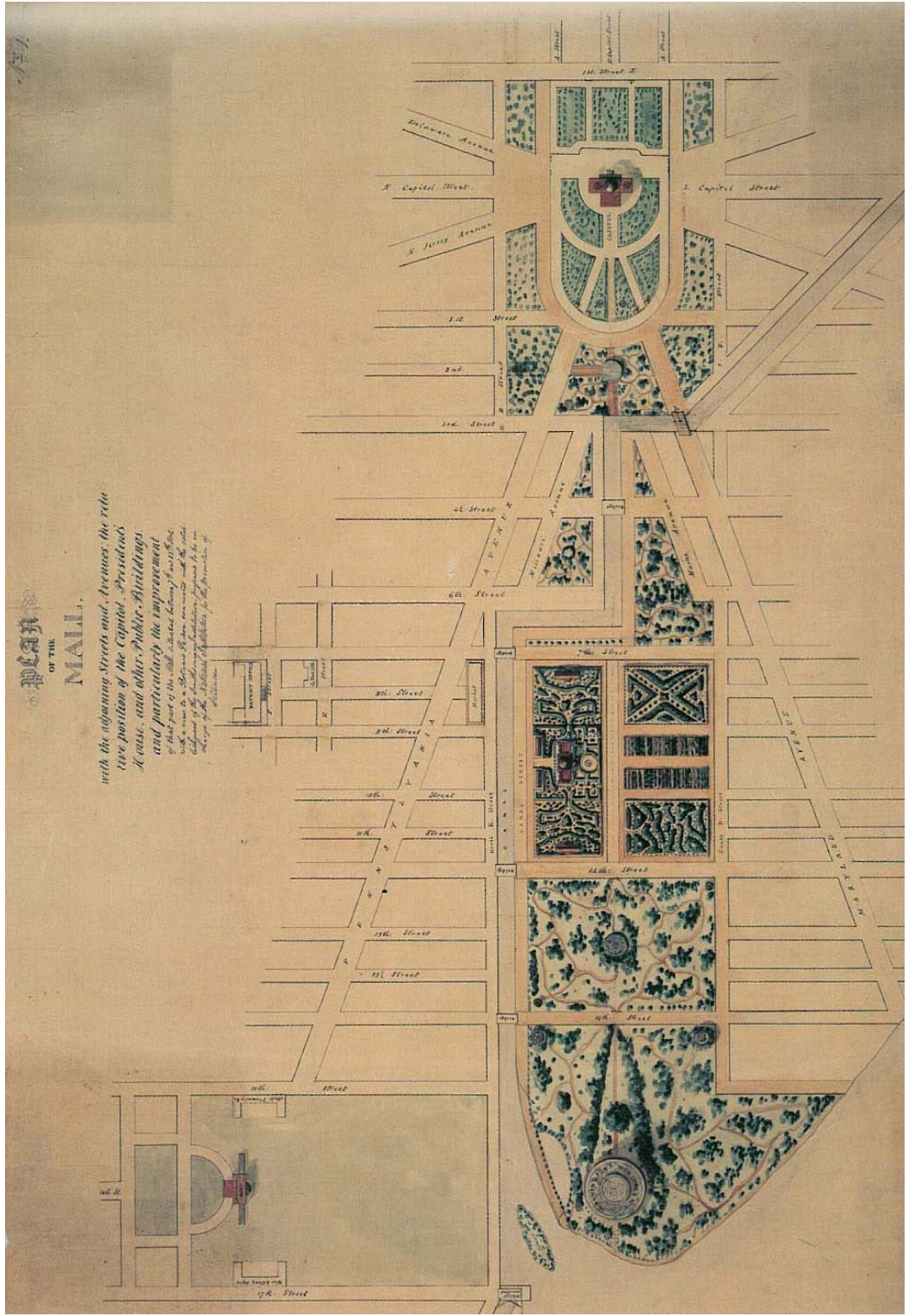
---

<sup>20</sup> Therese O'Malley, "A Public Museum of Trees: Mid-Nineteenth Century Plans for the Mall," in *The Mall in Washington 1791-1991*, ed. Richard Longstreth (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), 61-62.

<sup>21</sup> Scott, 47-49.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 52; Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 7. .

<sup>23</sup> Scott, 52-53.



**Figure 7:** In 1841, Robert Mills produced a plan intended (but not implemented) for the Smithsonian Institution between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> on the Mall. The “Plan of the Mall” also included a proposal for landscaping the entire area between the Capitol and Potomac. Plans for the Washington Monument Grounds indicate a large, circular monument to George Washington, surrounded by English picturesque gardens with meandering paths and a variety of trees and shrubs clustered throughout the walks (Robert Mills, “Plan of the Mall,” 1841, National Archives. Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).





**Figure 8:** The Washington Monument ca. 1863 showing its unfinished state, regrading, and construction sheds (Matthew Brady, "Washington Monument as it Stood for 25 years," Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. LC-BH823-2A).

functionally different, but were linked units terminating with the Washington Monument (Figure 9).<sup>24</sup> In 1851, Downing submitted his plan, but died a year later. With rising tensions leading to the Civil War, Congress only appropriated enough funds to complete landscaping for the Smithsonian Grounds and President's Park.<sup>25</sup> The Monument Grounds remained as undeveloped pasture. Downing's death undermined future implementation of his landscape and [resulted in a diluted version that was implemented in a piecemeal fashion throughout the 1850s. However, the unimplemented plans served as a set of guiding principles through the early twentieth century. They established the naturalistic approach to the Mall's appearance while reclaiming the public land that L'Enfant intended as the monumental core of Washington.<sup>26</sup>

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Washington's monumental core and open spaces became key sites for military troops. Cattle grazed on the Washington Monument Grounds, and what little landscaping existed before the war was largely neglected and destroyed.<sup>27</sup>

### *Post-Civil War Improvements (1871-1890s)*

Following the Civil War, Congress passed legislation to improve the city's infrastructure, which included improving and clearing streets, tending to neglected open space, and tending to the City Canal – which was by then a foul-smelling and unhealthy body of water.<sup>28</sup> At the time, the Monument Grounds were in very poor condition and were prone to flooding at high tide; in addition, they possessed very few roads, walkways, trees or shrubbery – not to mention the incomplete Washington Monument.<sup>29</sup> Preliminary improvements were proposed in 1863 to fill a portion of the northwest corner of the site. This plan would provide 152,700 square feet of additional land around the already existing island. (Figure 10). A proposed “new road” cuts in a curved fashion through the Monument Grounds, and no special features are shown on the NMAAHC site.

In 1871-73, Alexander (“Boss”) Shepherd and the city's Board of Public Works converted the canal, which ran at the northern edge of the Monument Grounds, into an underground culvert and enlarged B Street (now Constitution Avenue).<sup>30</sup> The Corps of Engineers initiated a number of improvements to the grounds between 1871 and 1877. In 1872-73, a curving, tree-lined 35-

---

<sup>24</sup> Further discussion of each garden piece is presented in detail in O'Malley, 64-71.

<sup>25</sup> It is unclear how much of the Downing plan was implemented in President's Park before his death, although his plans served as guidance for the Olmsted Plan of 1935. *Comprehensive Design Plan: The White House & President's Park*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 29 March 2000.

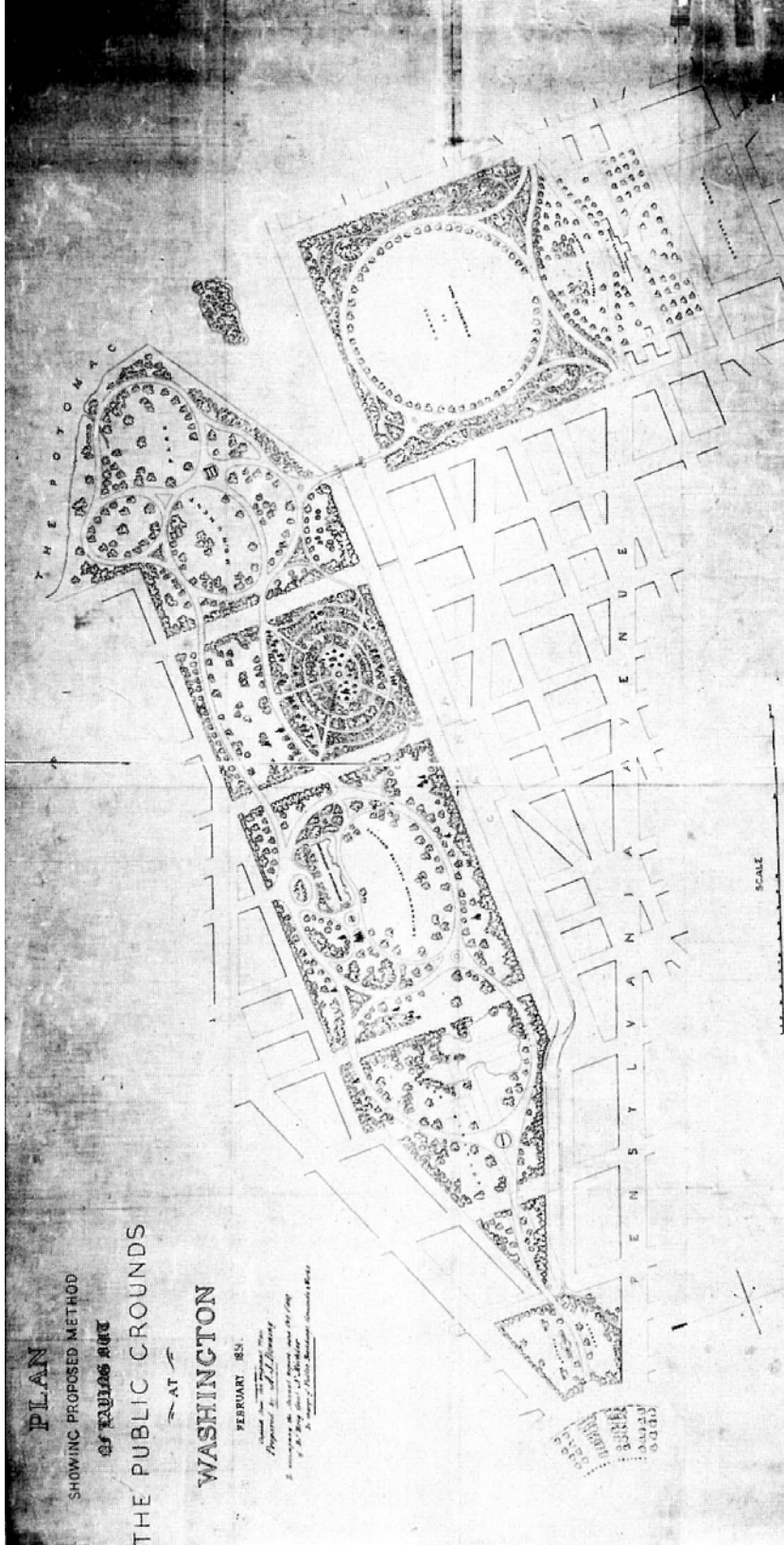
<sup>26</sup> O'Malley, “A Public Museum of Trees,” 71-73.

<sup>27</sup> HABS, L'Enfant-McMillan Plan, 18-19.

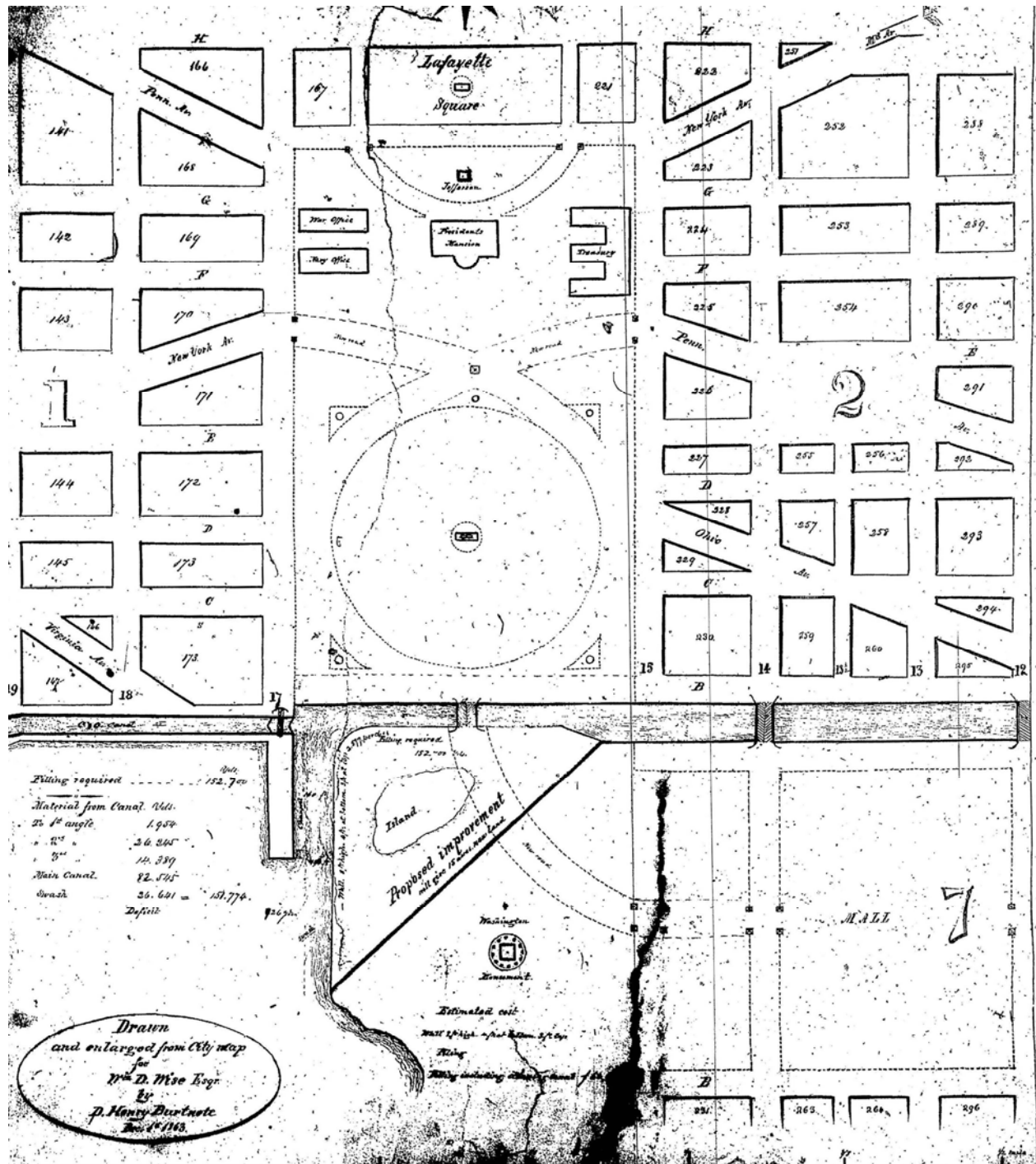
<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> HABS, L'Enfant McMillan Plan, 5-6; Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 19.



**Figure 9:** Andrew Jackson Downing was employed by the Commission of Public Buildings to inspect the city's public grounds and envision a new plan for the Mall in 1850. His preeminence as a landscape architect who advocated agrarian virtues was reflected in his plans for the Mall. Downing's design for the Mall was similar to Mills' in that the entire span of public grounds provided a series of gardens that were functionally different, but were linked units terminating with the Washington Monument. Only portions of Downing's plan were implemented on the Mall at the castle and Presidents Park (Andrew Jackson Downing's Plan for the Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, and President's Park, 1851 (Andrew Downing Jackson, Plan Showing Proposed Method of Laying Out the Public Grounds at Washington, 1851, copy by N. Michler, 1867. National Archives, Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).



**Figure 10:** At the outbreak of the Civil War, Washington’s monumental core and open spaces became key sites for military troops. Cattle grazed on the Washington Monument Grounds, and what little landscaping existed before the war was largely neglected and destroyed. Preliminary improvements were proposed in 1863 to fill a portion of the northwest corner of the site. This plan would provide 152,700 square feet of additional land surrounding the already existing island. Following the Civil War, in 1871-73, Alexander Shepherd and the city’s Board of Public Works converted the canal into an underground culvert and enlarged B Street, now Constitution Avenue (National Archives, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, NCP 807\_8400, copy located in Robinson & Assoc. “Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds.” June 10, 2002).

foot-wide road was constructed on the west side of the Jefferson Pier that connected B Street (Constitution Avenue) with 14<sup>th</sup> Street opposite the Agriculture Department grounds. The workers in charge of doing the roadwork uncovered the pier's foundation, and it was broken and removed as part of the grounds improvements. In addition, twenty acres of the monument grounds were drained to create Babcock Lake on the northwest side of the Monument, east of Meridian Avenue. The lake served a seawall for flood prevention and was fed by natural springs, but also functioned as a skating rink in the winter.<sup>31</sup> Gateposts originally designed by Charles Bullfinch for the U.S. Capitol grounds were moved from the Capitol to the vicinity of the Monument Grounds in 1874; this change was implemented as part of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s redesign of the Capitol Grounds. The gateposts were placed at the intersections of 15<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets. (One currently occupies the northwest corner of the NMAAHC site.) A row of deciduous trees was planted along portions of B Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets as well as both sides of Meridian Avenue.<sup>32</sup> Between 1875 and 1877, work commenced on further grading the Monument Grounds, and a total of 961 trees were planted throughout the grounds. An additional two lakes were constructed to the west of Babcock Lake, one approximately six acres and the other approximately four (Figure 11). In 1877 the lakes were modified into ponds for carp cultivation under the direction of the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries.<sup>33</sup>

Construction resumed on the Washington Monument in 1878 under the direction of the Corps of Engineers, after nearly 23 years of standing at about one-quarter of its intended height. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Casey served as chief engineer during the second phase of construction, and was responsible for its modified design.<sup>34</sup> He was also responsible for constructing additional footings at the base of the monument shaft, beneath the original stone foundations, for added stability in 1878-79 (Figure 12). By 1881 the Monument's 200-foot embankment was completed. The foundation was covered with dirt and rubble, forming a hill around the base.<sup>35</sup> During construction of the monument, Casey noted that the northern corners of the monument shifted more than the southern corners. It was suspected that this was due to the close proximity of Babcock Lake, which was only 250 feet from the Washington Monument's foundation. The lake was filled in 1887 (Figure 13).<sup>36</sup> In Figure 13, the current site of the NMAAHC is depicted west of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, undivided by the future length of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and appearing integral to the Monument Grounds. The site is crossed by a curvilinear pattern of paths. A final landscaping project, completed in 1888, deposited 250,000 cubic yards of fill

---

<sup>31</sup> Robinson & Associates, "Preliminary Research Findings: Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds," 1-2; Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 19, 31.

<sup>32</sup> Robinson & Associates., "Preliminary Research Findings," 2.

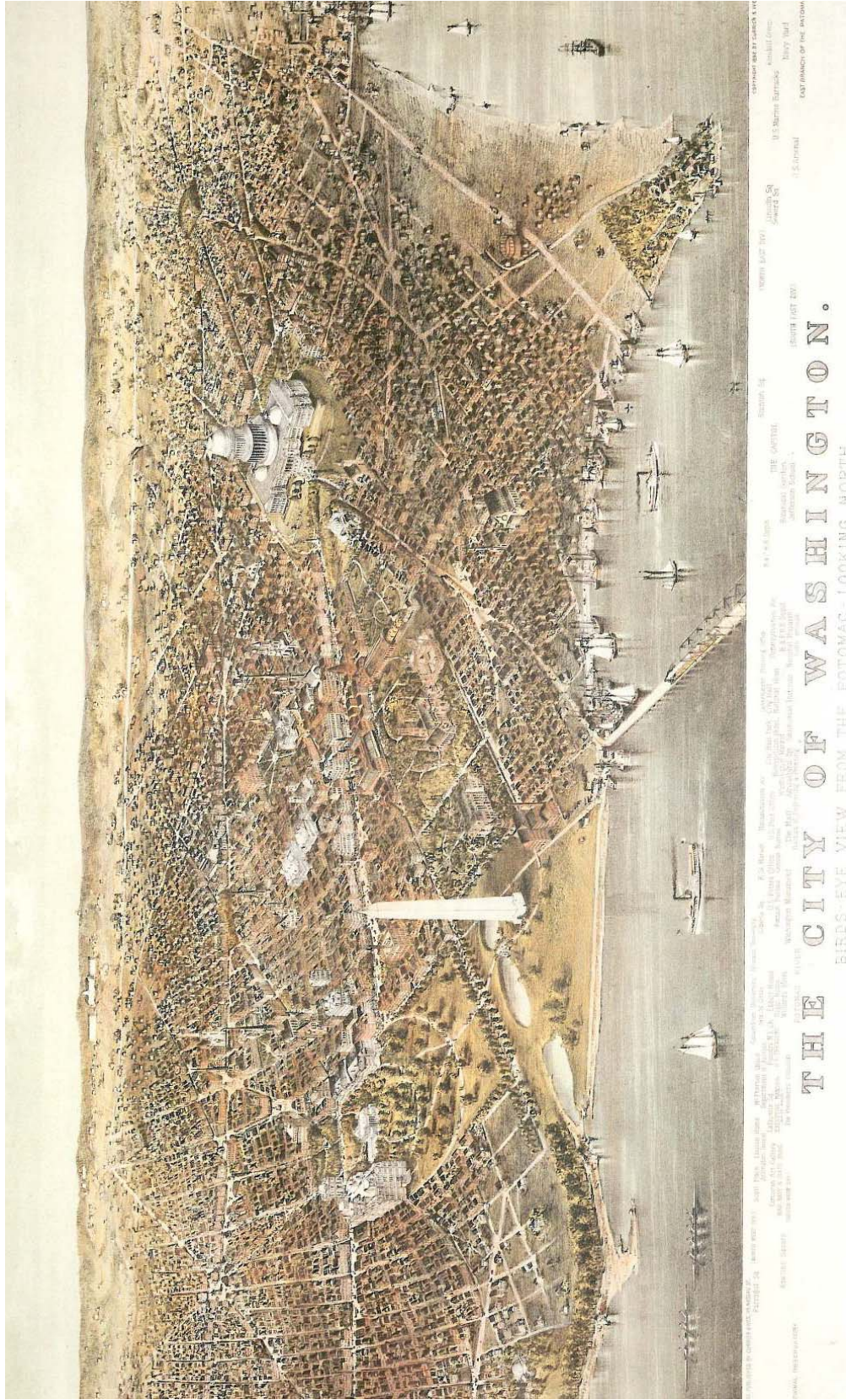
<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>34</sup> The revised design was 45' shorter than Mill's original plan with a much more steeply-pitched pyramidion, and lacked the circular colonnade at its base, as noted in Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 12-13.

<sup>35</sup> HABS, Washington Monument. No. DC-428, by Aaron V. Wunsch (Washington, D.C.: 1994), 10.

<sup>36</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 19-20.





**Figure 11:** In 1872-73, a curving 35-foot-wide road was constructed on the west side of the Jefferson Pier that connected B Street (Constitution Avenue) with 14<sup>th</sup> Street opposite the Agriculture Department grounds. In addition, between 1873 and 1875 three lakes were added to the north and west of the Washington Monument. This birds-eye view of the City of Washington from the Potomac River (1892) illustrates the simple grounds configuration and three ponds on the site and shows the NMAAHC site as an open, grassy area lined with trees on the north and east sides. (“The City of Washington: Birds-Eye View from the Potomac.” Published by Currier & Ives, New York, 1892. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*.)

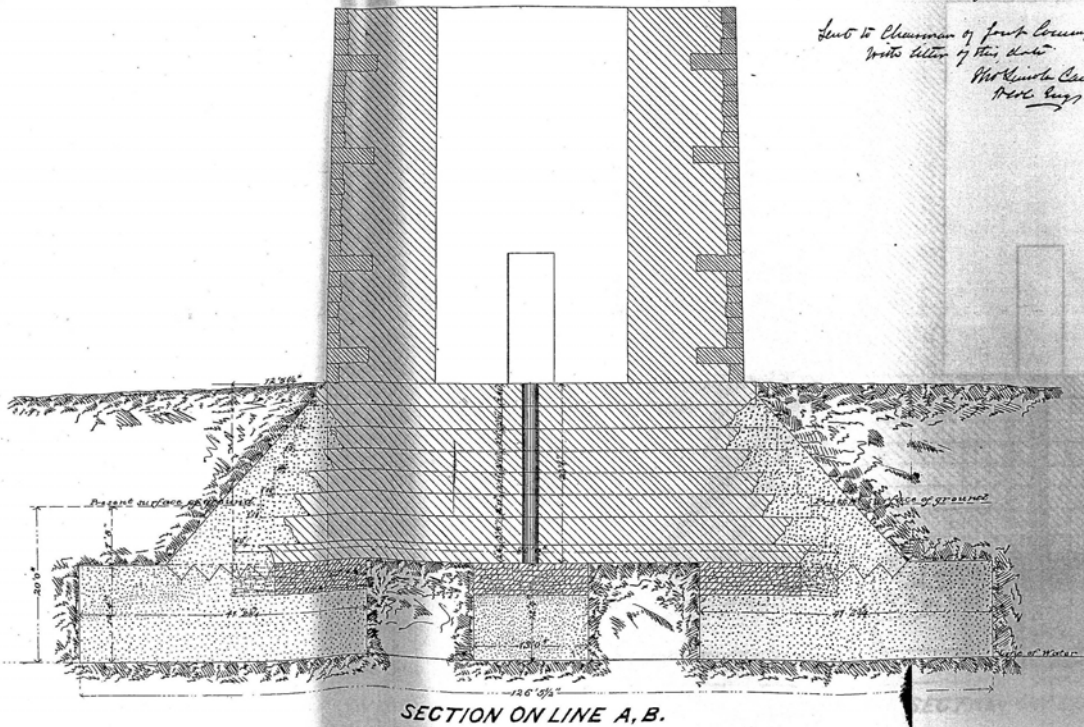
PLAN FOR  
STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION  
OF THE  
WASHINGTON MONUMENT

As Designed by  
LT. COL. T. L. CASEY, CORPS OF ENGRS, U.S.A.

SCALE 1" = 30'

Engineer Office, Washington Monument  
July 27, 1878

Sent to Chairman of Joint Committee  
with letter of this date  
Wm. Kinzie Casey  
Civil Eng.



SECTION ON LINE A, B.

**Figure 12:** Construction resumed on the Washington Monument in 1878 under the direction of the Corps of Engineers, after nearly 23 years of standing at about one-quarter of its intended height. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Casey served as chief engineer during the second phase of construction, and was responsible for its modified design. He was also responsible for constructing additional footings at the base of the monument shaft, beneath the original stone foundations, for added stability in 1878-79 (“Plan for Strengthening the Foundation of the Washington Monument” Designed by Lt. Col. Casey, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A., 1879. National Archives, copy found in Robinson & Assoc. “Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds.” June 10, 2002).





**Figure 13:** Lieutenant Colonel Casey was also responsible for the infill of Babcock Lake, which was originally located just north of the monument. The “Alto-graph of Washington City,” 1892 shows the state of the Washington Monument Grounds in 1892, particularly detailing road configurations and the existing carp ponds. The current site of the NMAAHC is depicted west of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, undivided by the future length of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and appearing integral to the Monument Grounds. The site is crossed by a curvilinear pattern of paths (“Alto-graph of Washington City, or, Strangers’ Guide” by James t. DuBois, 1892. Library of Congress, Geography and Maps. Reproduced in Reps, *Washington on View*).

around the monument to create the gentle knoll surrounding the Monument on all four sides.<sup>37</sup> In 1888-89 a 10-foot-wide granolithic pavement was laid around the Washington Monument's base to cover a 70-foot radius. The pavement was surrounded by an 8-inch granolithic curb and gutter, which was surrounded by a gravel roadway that was 50 feet wide. Stemming from the gravel roadway were 30-foot-wide roadways with 9-foot-wide paths that led to various entrances on the grounds.<sup>38</sup>

The monument finally opened to the public in 1888 and further work was transferred from the Monument Commission to Army Corps of Engineers. In the following year, the Monument Lodge, located 400 feet east of the monument, was erected to house the Washington National Monument Society records, office custodian, and public restrooms. After years of serving as a construction site, with associated machinery and shops, the grounds were described as “an inviting stretch of park land, the venue of innumerable public gatherings.”<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, L'Enfant's vision of the city's public land was often not carried through or ignored. In the case of the Mall, rather than consisting of a continuous boulevard connecting the Capitol and the Monument Grounds, the land was divided into several segments that visually divided the monumental space. Following the Washington Monument's completion, the grounds were maintained as a park-like setting with curving roads and gravel paths lined with trees and shrubs. By 1894, the Washington Monument Grounds had grown from the original 44 acres to 78 acres (composed mostly fill on the western part of the site) and sections of the park roads were open for public travel. The current NMAAHC site is depicted in the lower left-hand corner of a 1901-05 plan (oriented with north at the bottom of the plan); the site is simply detailed, with perimeter trees at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and what is now Constitution Avenue, and curved paths set into the landscape (Figure 14).<sup>40</sup>

*The McMillan (Senate Park Commission) Plan and its implementation (1901-1940s)*

In March 1901, the Committee of the District of Columbia was directed by the Senate to “consider the subject and report to the Senate plans for the development and improvement of the entire park system of the District of Columbia.”<sup>41</sup> With a resolution introduced by Senator James McMillan, a commission was selected to oversee the overall improvements of parks within the District of Columbia. The Senate Park Commission (the McMillan Commission) included Daniel H. Burnham, Charles F. McKim, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Auguste St. Gaudens. The commission envisioned the Mall as a formal tree-lined walk flanked by classical buildings,

---

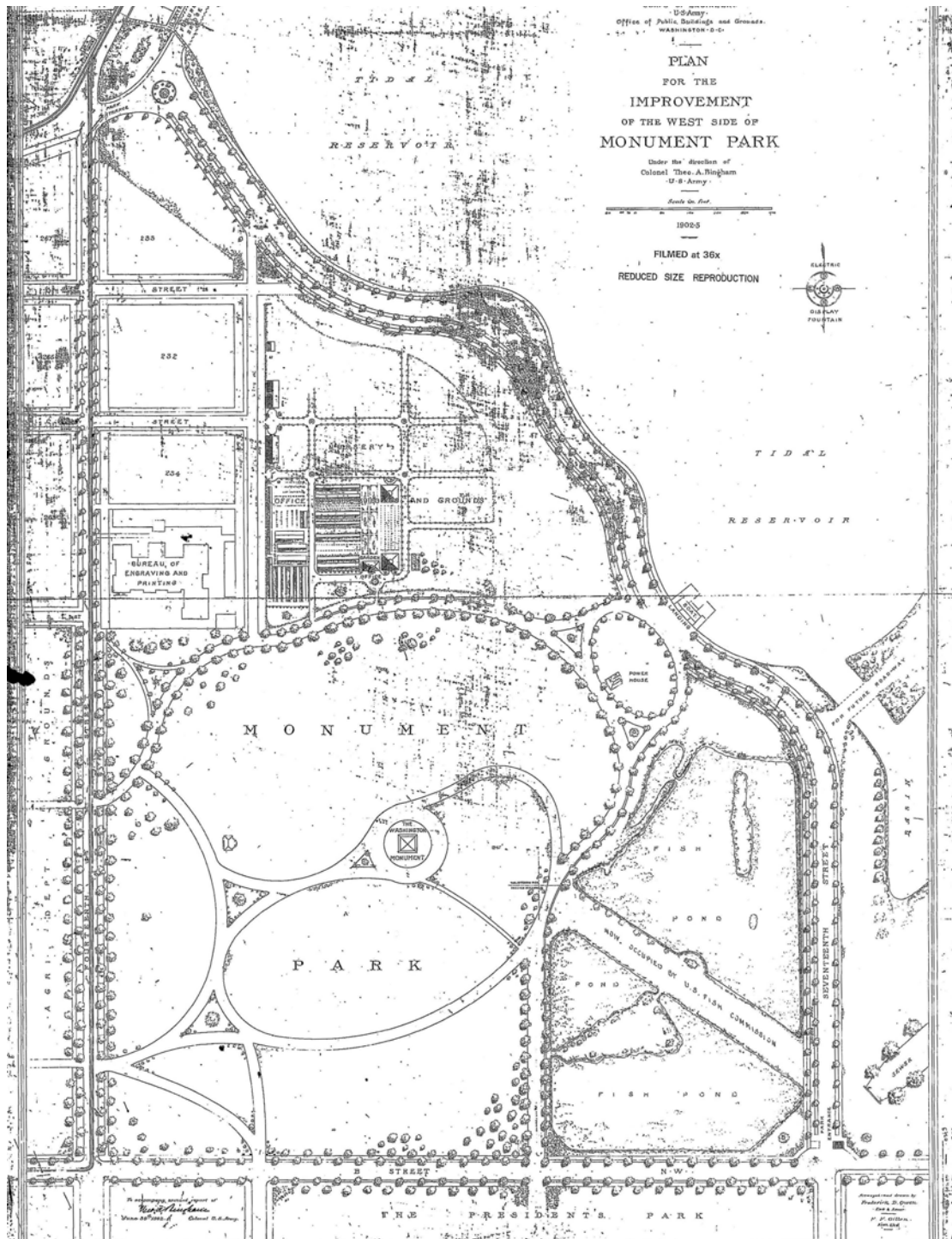
<sup>37</sup> National Register of Historic Places-Nomination Form, “Washington Monument,” (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1981), section 7, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p.7-19.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, chapter 2, p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Moore, ed., “The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia.” 57<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, *Senate Report 166* (1902), 7.



**Figure 14:** By 1894, the Washington Monument Grounds had grown from the original 44 acres to 78 acres (composed mostly of fill on the western part of the site) and sections of the park roads were open for public travel. The current NMAAHC site is depicted in the lower left-hand corner of a 1901-05 plan (oriented with north at the bottom of the plan); the site is simply detailed, with perimeter trees at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and what is now Constitution Avenue, and curved paths set into the landscape (“Plan for the Improvement of the West side of Monument Park,” 1901-05. National Archives, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, NCP 807\_84053, copy located in Robinson & Associates, Robinson & Assoc. “Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds.” June 10, 2002).



creating an unbroken vista between the Capitol and Washington Monument. The McMillan Plan marked a major shift from Downing's ideas of a picturesque landscape to a more formal, symmetrical plan that was based largely on City Beautiful planning principles. However, the Commission also respected L'Enfant's early directives for the city. Charles Moore, then Secretary of the Commission, stressed that its ideas for Washington's monumental core "was not a new plan, but merely a restoration and continuation of the original plan of the city."<sup>42</sup>

The ambitious McMillan Plan sought to re-establish elements of the L'Enfant Plan, which included the restoration of the east end of the Mall, the correction of the somewhat awkward off-axis placement of the Washington Monument, and the inclusion of the new "Potomac Park" (i.e., East and West Potomac Parks).<sup>43</sup> The visual focal point of the McMillan Plan was the Mall, which the Commission proposed to extend westward and enhance as a formal, axial greensward. The Commission members interpreted the L'Enfant Plan as calling for "treating the entire space as a unit," set aside entirely for public use. According to the Commission's report, the condition of the Mall had gradually changed "from a common pasture into a series of park spaces unequally developed, indeed, and in places broken in upon by being put to commercial or other extraneous uses, but nevertheless becoming more and more appreciated from year to year."<sup>44</sup> The McMillan Plan depicted the improved Mall as a single, grand axis leading from the Capitol to a proposed Lincoln Memorial to be constructed on newly reclaimed land to the west. The Commission members envisioned the north side of the Mall lined by "buildings devoted to scientific purposes and for the great museums." A specific landscape treatment proposed for the Mall created "an expanse of undulating green a mile and a half long and three hundred feet broad, walled on either side by elms, planted in formal procession four abreast."<sup>45</sup>

As a central focal point of the Mall, the Washington Monument grounds were to be landscaped in a very formal way intended to compensate for the off-axis placement of the Monument. A cross-axis was proposed between the White House and a new "Washington Common," a recreational area to be built on recently reclaimed land to the south, where such facilities as a stadium, playing fields, playground equipment, and boating facilities along the Tidal Basin were to provide recreational opportunities for local citizens and visitors. To form the terminus of the cross-axis, the Commission proposed "a great memorial," either in the form of a Pantheon devoted to national heroes, or as a monument to an individual.<sup>46</sup>

A 1901 existing conditions map produced by the Senate Park Commission illustrates the large block of Washington Monument grounds set between B Street (Constitution), 14<sup>th</sup> Street, the

---

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in David C. Streatfield, "The Olmsteds and the Landscape of the Mall," in *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991*, ed., Richard Longstreth (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2002), 123.

<sup>43</sup> Robinson & Associates, National Register of Historic Places-Revised Nomination Form, "East and West Potomac Parks Historic District," (Washington, D.C.: 1999), 43-44.

<sup>44</sup> Moore, 43.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 47-50.

“Tidal Reservoir,” and filled land to the west. The site of the NMAAHC is depicted with simple tree-lined walks (Figure 15). Proposed treatments for the Washington Monument (never implemented) included a formal sunken garden surrounded by terraces of elms and fountains. The plan attempted to regularize the Washington Monument site within a true square (bounded on the east by what would have been a straight north-south extension of 15<sup>th</sup> Street), with more symmetrically balanced formal features (Figure 16). A round pool west of the monument would intersect with the true north-south axis of L’Enfant’s original plan and reestablish the Monument Grounds as the “gem of the Mall system” (Figures 17-18).<sup>47</sup> Wooded areas, or bosks, were placed on elevated terraces around the sunken garden to further accentuate the grandeur of the monument when viewed from the west. The terraces also served as an enclosure for the garden, which emphasized the monument grounds as a terminus in the formal plan.<sup>48</sup> An aerial view from the Senate Park Commission Plan illustrates the terraced bosks and also emphasizes the important view preserved from the White House to the Potomac as stipulated by L’Enfant (Figure 19). The plan also included an area of municipal buildings within the area bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the Mall. In this plan, the area now designated as the NMAAHC site is rectangular in shape and sits outside of the clusters of trees that line the sunken monument terrace. In some plans produced for the Senate Park Commission’s reports, the NMAAHC site is location for a public building, and later depicted as a potential site for the Department of State (Figure 20).

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was a prominent force in the development and implementation of the McMillan Plan and was selected for the Commission partially for his young age. Throughout the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Olmsted became, more or less, the official custodian of the plan. His involvement with the Commission of Fine Arts, National Capital Park Commission, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission enabled him to provide a consistent voice that advocated the principles established by the McMillan Commission in 1902. By the end of the 1930s, a majority of the Mall and Washington Monument’s landscape had been completed under the advice and direction of Olmsted, Jr.<sup>49</sup>

At the suggestion of the McMillan Commission, President Taft appointed seven men to the newly authorized Commission of Fine Arts in 1910. The commission was intended to serve as consulting body for the government’s design for bridges, sculpture, parks and other works of art. In 1911 their responsibilities were extended to public buildings. The first major decision made by the Commission of Fine Arts was the location of the proposed Lincoln Memorial, which recommended its placement in Potomac Park at the west end of the major axis that included the Capitol and Washington Monument. The placement of the Lincoln Memorial in Potomac Park was of greatest importance because it carried through the McMillan Plan’s intention to extend the Mall’s east-west axis from the Capitol all the way to the Potomac River.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 43-44, 47.

<sup>48</sup> Streathfield, 126-27.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 130-31.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 130.

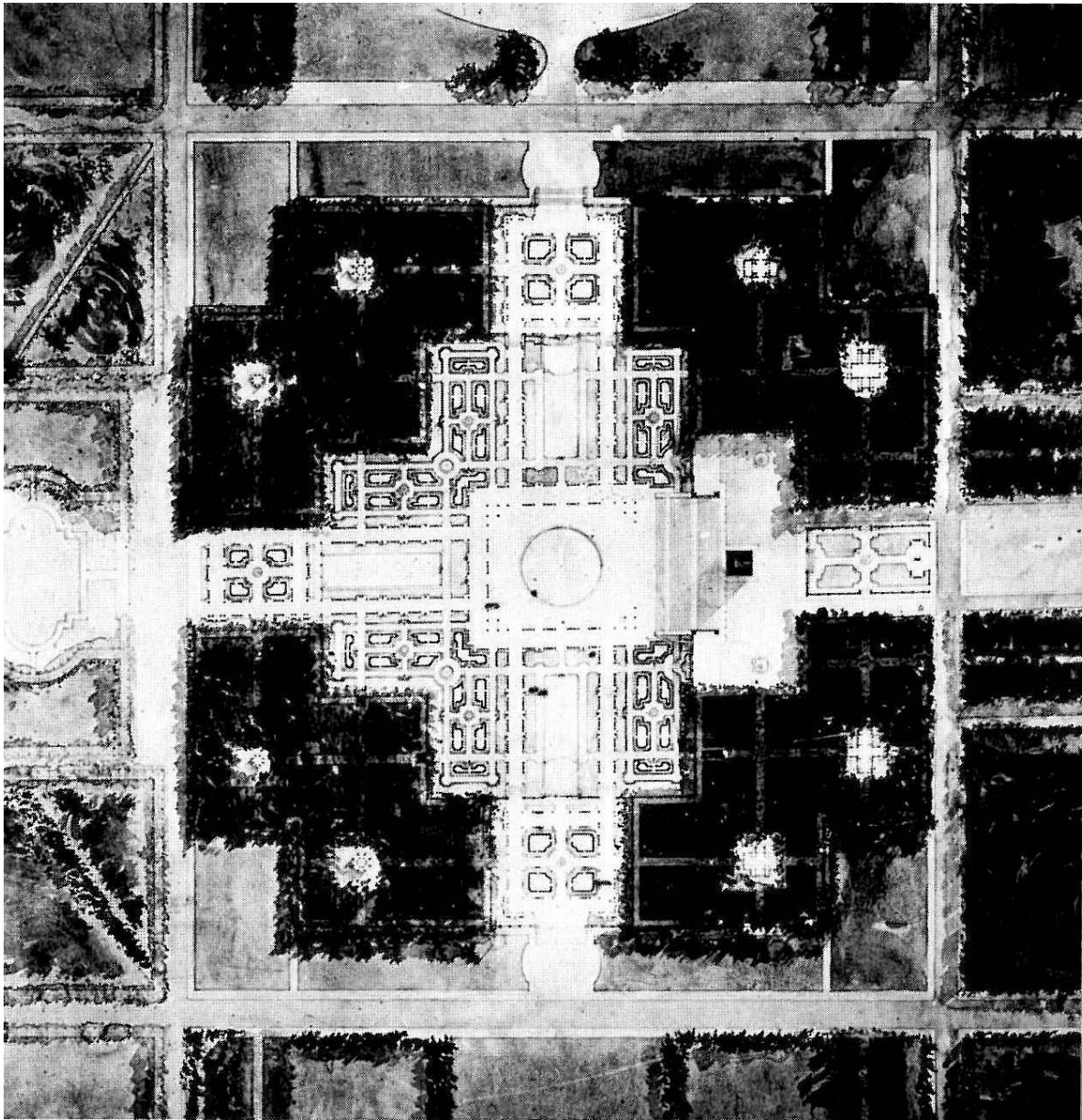


**Figure 15:** A detail of a 1901 existing conditions map produced by the Senate Park Commission illustrates the large block of Washington Monument grounds set between B Street (Constitution), 14<sup>th</sup> Street, the “Tidal Reservoir,” and filled land to the west. The site of the NMAAHC is depicted with simple tree-lined walks (“Map of the District of Columbia,” 1901, No. D-99. Prepared by the Sub-Committee on the Improvement of the Park System, Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901, Washington, D.C.).



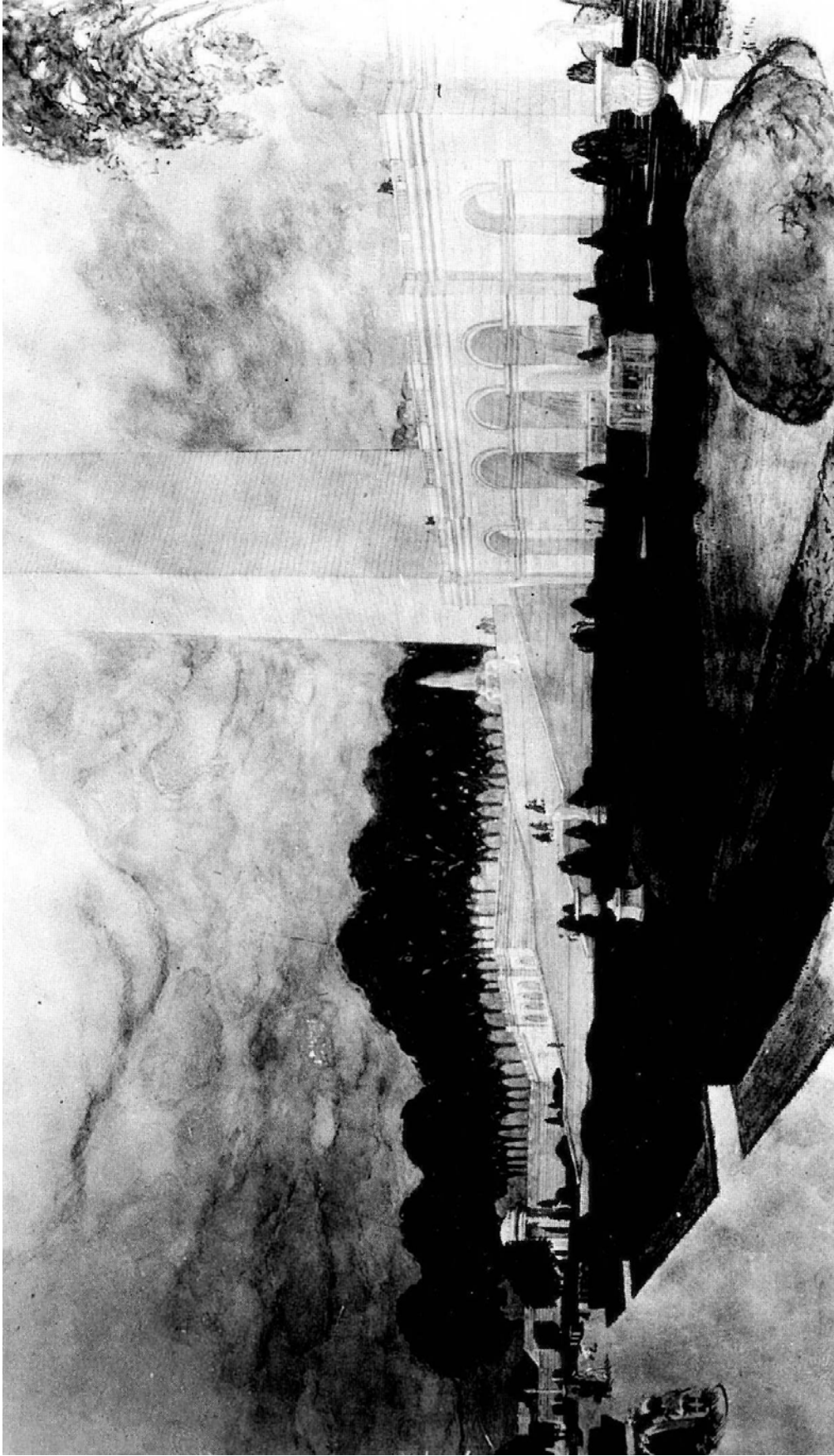


**Figure 16:** Proposed Senate Park Commission treatments for the Washington Monument (never implemented) included a formal sunken garden surrounded by terraces of elms and fountains. The plan attempted to regularize the Washington Monument site within a true square (bounded on the east by what would have been a straight north-south extension of 15<sup>th</sup> Street), with more symmetrically balanced formal features. Wooded areas, or bosks, were placed on elevated terraces around the sunken garden to further accentuate the grandeur of the monument when viewed from the west. It also served as an enclosure for the garden, which emphasized the monument grounds as a terminus in the formal plan. The Monument's reflection in the reflecting pool was intended to further emphasize the important east west axis. ("The Mall: The McMillan Plan, 1901" Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901).

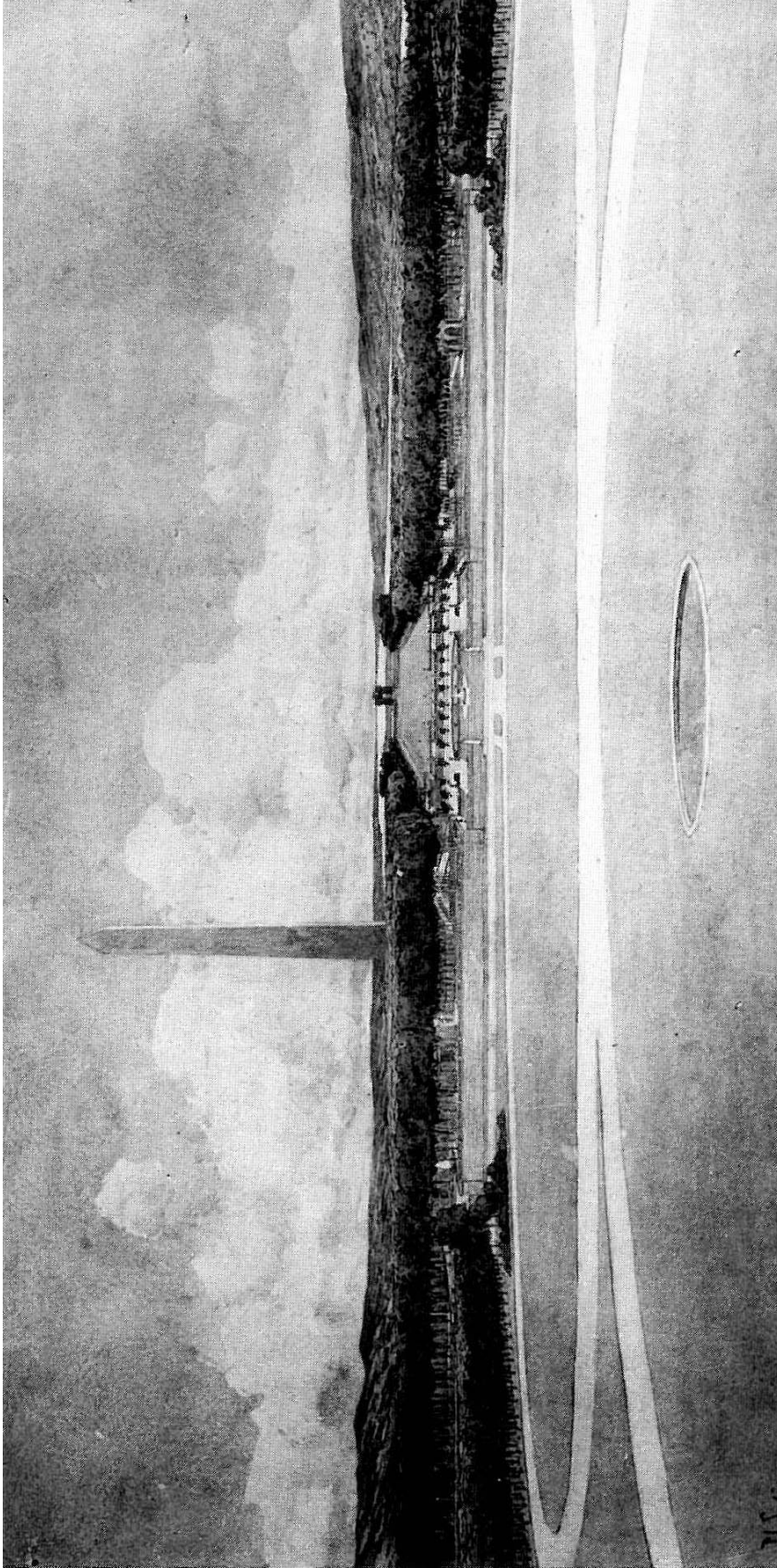


**Figure 17:** The McMillan Plan described a round pool west of the Washington Monument (the darkened square to the right of the central circle on this plan) that would intersect with the true north-south axis of L'Enfant's original plan. The realignment of the intended axis was intended to reestablish the Monument Grounds as the "gem of the Mall system" (Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02, "Plan showing Proposed Treatment of Monument Garden," rendering by George de Gersdorff. Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).

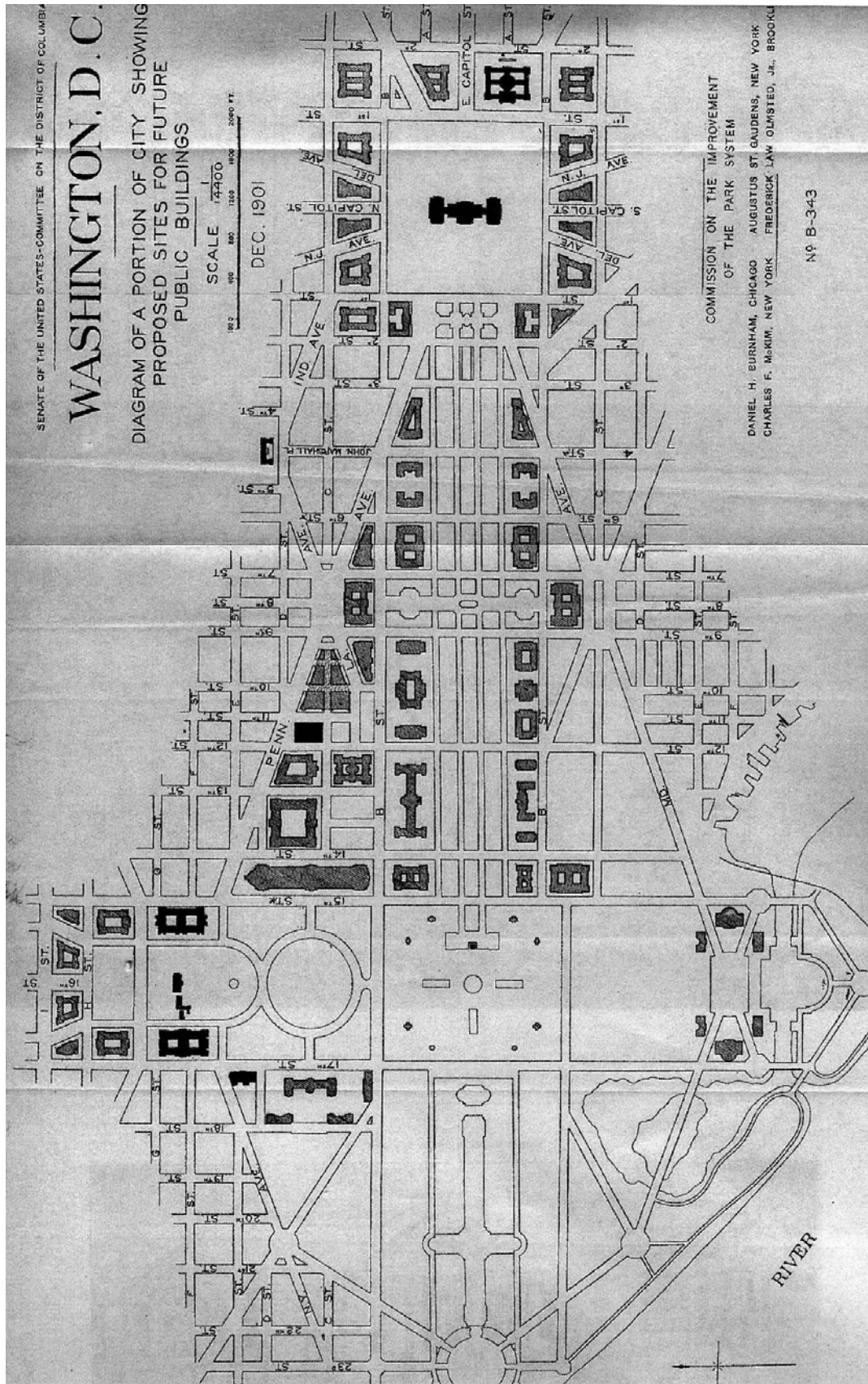




**Figure 18:** The rendering of the Monument Garden illustrates the wooded areas, or bosks, designed on elevated terraces around the sunken garden. The terraces further accentuated the grandeur of the monument when viewed from the west. It also served as an enclosure for the garden, which emphasized the monument grounds as a terminus in the formal plan (Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02, "View in the Monument Garden, Looking Toward the White House," rendering by O.H. Bacher. Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).



**Figure 19:** An aerial view from the Senate Park Commission Report further illustrates the terraced bosks and the extent to which the Washington Monument sits off direct axis. This dramatic view also emphasizes the important view preserved from the White House to the Potomac as stipulated by L'Enfant (Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02, "View of the Monument and Terraces from the White House." Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1791-1991*).



**Figure 20:** The Senate Park Commission Plan also included an grouping of municipal buildings within the area bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the Mall. In the plan, the area now designated as the NMAAHC site is rectangular in shape and in some plans included in the Senate Park Commission's reports, is a location for a public building. This building was later designated as a potential location for the Department of State. The Department of State instead moved to its current location at 23<sup>rd</sup> and C Streets and plans to build it on the NMAAHC site were abandoned (Senate Park Commission, Plan of 1901-02, "Diagram of a Portion of City Showing Proposed Sites for Future Public Building.").

In 1910 the Commission of Fine Arts preliminarily approved a building for the State Department to be located on the northeast corner of the Washington Monument grounds (the NMAAHC site).<sup>51</sup> Plans for the building at this location were never realized and the Department of State was instead built at its current location at 23<sup>rd</sup> and C Streets. In 1917 the Sylvan Theater stage was constructed south of the Washington Monument.<sup>52</sup> That same year, the United States entered World War I. Just as the Civil War effected profound changes in Washington in the 1860s, the United States' entry into World War I brought major changes to the nation's capital. The population expanded from 280,000 in 1900 to 525,000 in 1918. Wood and stucco temporary buildings, or "tempos," sprang up on prominent federal lands such as the Mall, West Potomac Park, and the grounds southwest of Union Station.<sup>53</sup>

As the nation returned to normalcy following the armistice in 1919, Washington was faced with planning dilemmas that could not be solved by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Commission of Fine Arts, or the city commissioners alone. With the rapid spread of the city--ever accelerated by the exploding population of people and automobiles--the need for a body to oversee regional city planning became apparent. Citizens groups such as the American Planning and Civic Association and its local arm, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, lobbied for congressional intervention. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC) was created by Congress June 6, 1924.<sup>54</sup> Comprised of the chief of the Army Corps of Engineers and the officer in charge of the OPB&G, the engineer commissioner of the District of Columbia, the director of the National Park Service, and the chairmen of the congressional committees on the District of Columbia, the NCPC and its successor, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC) of 1926, were charged with acquiring new parkland in the region surrounding the original city. L'Enfant's and the McMillan Commission's ideals continued to provide the guiding force for these planners.<sup>55</sup>

By 1921, the McMillan Plan concept for the Washington Monument Grounds was still under consideration but most of the funding to implement the McMillan Commission's plans for the grounds was not available until the 1930s – although improvements to the grounds were continually made throughout this time period. Various recreational facilities were added, including swimming pools, tennis courts, and baseball fields – primarily on the west side of the monument. In addition, roads and walking paths were added and improved (Figure 21-22).<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> See Appendices in *Final Site Report: National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission*, 2003 for Commission of Fine Arts meeting minutes and preliminary drawings of proposed State Department Building.

<sup>52</sup> HABS, National Mall and Monument Grounds, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Robinson & Associates, "Plan of the City of Washington," 95.

<sup>54</sup> The National Capital Park Commission (NCPC) was reorganized in 1926 as the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC). As a result of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, the NCP&PC was reorganized again, and the word "park" was dropped from the title making it the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC).

<sup>55</sup> Robinson & Associates, "Plan of the City of Washington," 96-97.

<sup>56</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 32-34, 37-38.





**Figure 21:** Although funding for the Senate Park Commission (McMillan Plan) of 1901 was not appropriated until the 1930s, numerous improvements to the Washington Monument Grounds took place, including the additional circulation for both pedestrians and automobiles. A detail of a 1917 map depicts a more complex set of roads at what would later become the 15<sup>th</sup> Street stretch on the Washington Monument Grounds, but the current NMAAHC site is still characterized by the same patterns as the Washington Monument Grounds as a whole (“The Mall and Vicinity: Buildings Occupied by Various Government Activities,” 1917. Prepared by the Public Buildings Commission under the direction of Colonel W.W. Harts and Colonel C.S. Ridley, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army. National Archives and Records Administration, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission).





**Figure 22:** By 1921, the McMillan Plan concept for the Washington Monument Grounds was still under consideration but most of the funding to implement the Commission's plans for the grounds was not available until the 1930s – although improvements to the grounds were continually made throughout this time period. This aerial photograph ca. early-1920s details the various recreational facilities that were added to the grounds, including swimming pools, tennis courts, and baseball fields – primarily to the west side of the monument (NARA, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission, n.d.)



The vegetation pattern within the Monument Grounds is generally consistent with landscape features dating back to the turn of the twentieth century (see McMillan Plan model of Monument Grounds, 1920s aerial photograph of Washington Monument Grounds from Longstreth, CXII). The streets surrounding the Washington Monument Grounds are lined with American elm canopy trees, which generally border both sides of the street. The NMAAHC site in particular contains trees along Constitution Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street, but not along Madison Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street. An unidentified structure sits on the NMAAHC site.<sup>57</sup>

Throughout the early twentieth century, Washington's population continued to grow, and automobile registrations within the city quadrupled between 1920 and 1930. The growing popularity of cars had a major impact on planning during these decades and city planners had to reconcile the need for maintaining Washington's historic plan and the population's use of L'Enfant's streets for their daily commute.<sup>58</sup> In 1927, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission developed guidelines for future treatment of the Mall as based on the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans. The plan resulted in a rendered study for the Mall area that emphasized the importance of existing boundaries and the preservation of open views and vistas (Figure 23). The illustrated plan sparked discussion of the incomplete state of the Washington Monument Grounds, especially compared to the completed Lincoln Memorial (1922).<sup>59</sup>

In 1928, a bill was introduced in Congress to appropriate \$500,000,000 to complete the McMillan Plan, which included \$30,000 for preparing plans and estimates specifically aimed at improving the Monument Grounds.<sup>60</sup> An advisory committee was formed to study the stability of the monument, and in 1930 test borings were made to test the subsoil conditions. Extensive studies and debates arose regarding the stability of the Monument throughout discussions on construction of the proposed sunken terrace. Finally engineers on the committee concluded that the monument possessed a satisfactory level of stability, but implementing the McMillan Plan on the Washington Monument Grounds would require fill that exceeded ten times the weight of the monument. Two options were given as a result of the test borings: underpin the monument's foundations to bedrock, or dismantle the entire monument and rebuild it with a new foundation. Prohibitive costs and effort of stabilizing the monument led the committee to suggest that the McMillan Plan proposals be abandoned for the site – because of its threat to the structural integrity of the Monument, but also due to its lack of planning for the automobile – and that other means of incorporating the grounds into the surrounding Mall should be explored.<sup>61</sup>

---

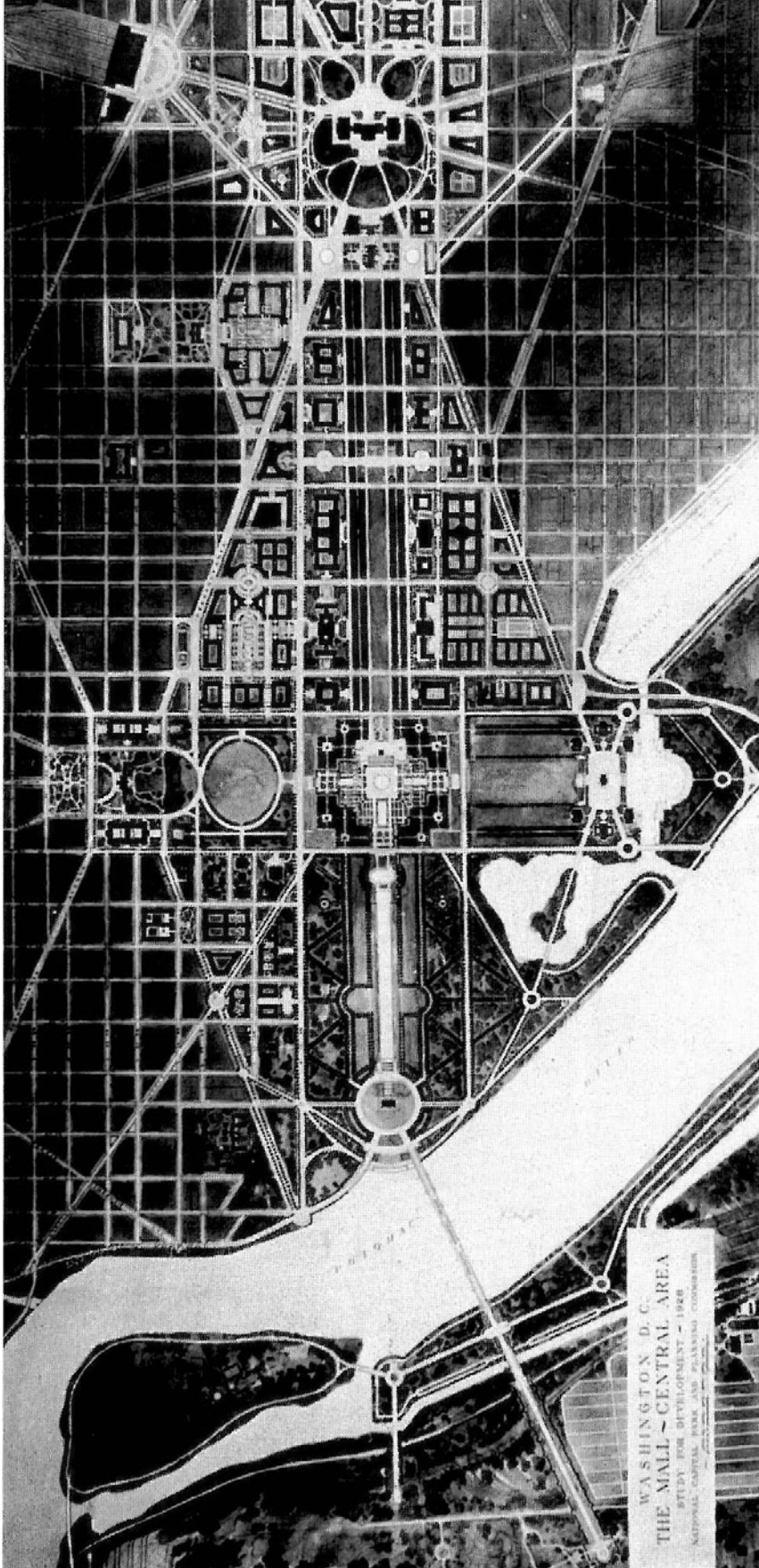
<sup>57</sup> Ibid, chapter 3, p. 15-16.

<sup>58</sup> HABS, L'Enfant-McMillan Plan, 53-54.

<sup>59</sup> Streathfield, 132-33.

<sup>60</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 49.

<sup>61</sup> Grant, Ulysses S., III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, *Improvement of the Washington Monument Grounds, Communication from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report on the Improvement of the Washington Monument Grounds Authorized by the Independent Offices Act of 1931, Approved April 19, 1930, Together with Several Plans and Estimates Therefore*, 72<sup>nd</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, House Document no. 528 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), 6-13.



**Figure 23:** In 1927, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission developed guidelines for future treatment of the Mall as based on the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans. The plan resulted in a rendered study for the Mall area, bearing a great resemblance to the original McMillan Plan, which emphasized the importance of existing boundaries and the preservation of open views and vistas. The illustrated plan sparked discussion of the incomplete state of the Washington Monument Grounds, especially compared to the completed Lincoln Memorial (National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, "The Mall, Central Area, Study for Development," 1928. Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1771-1991*).

Olmsted, Jr., in collaboration with Henry Hubbard, and William A. Delano, architect and member of the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, submitted alternate plans to the advisory committee for the Washington Monument grounds in 1931. That same year, Avenue B North was widened and renamed Constitution Avenue to provide a ceremonial route in the city extending all the way to Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>62</sup> William Delano submitted plans for a landscape called the “Balustrade or Formal Plan.” The scheme included rows of elms and paths extending onto the monument grounds that continued the lines of the Reflecting Pool and offset the unbalanced monument with an elliptical masonry structure extending on the east portion of the site (Figure 24). Delano’s Balustrade Plan was later eliminated as too invasive and a potential threat to the Washington Monument’s stability.<sup>63</sup>

Olmsted’s design, the “Informal Plan,” was intended to eliminate extensive amounts of disturbance to the grounds and called for a circumferential road around the Washington Monument to connect the Mall roads to the Lincoln Memorial. His plan also recommended creating an underpass at 14<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate “business traffic” and leaving the above-ground roads for sightseers. Olmsted’s vision was less regularized than the McMillan Plan and included a more naturalistic setting with elm trees planted in sweeping clusters to provide views and vistas from north to south (Figure 25).<sup>64</sup> Olmsted emphasized the importance of views of the Washington Monument from a number of vantage points, both as a pedestrian and in an automobile, which included the dominant formal allee looking both east and west of the monument.

After much debate, the director of Public Buildings and Grounds of the National Capital, Ulysses S. Grant III, recommended that minimal treatment be given to the Monument Grounds with regards to adopting any formal plans that would involve extensive grading and filling. In his report to the President Herbert Hoover, Grant stressed that “the fact that traffic can not flow undisturbed through the Monument Grounds from the existing streets makes of this central feature of the city which Washington founded an irritating obstacle and emphasizes its lack of relation to the other elements of the central area of the National Capital.”<sup>65</sup> Although acknowledging that the Monument Grounds were incongruent with the rest of the Mall development, Grant suggested that “the retention of the present character of this park as the central-feature of the city, although with the changes in detail necessary to tie it into the changed surroundings, would seem wise because it has had the approval of at least two succeeding generations and because it has consequently become identified with the Monument itself in the public mind.” Grant’s recommendations would follow the horizontal layout of Olmsted’s informal plan – reconfiguring the existing roads and plantings in relationship to the Lincoln Memorial and the Mall – while delaying more invasive grading work to depress 14<sup>th</sup> Street to a

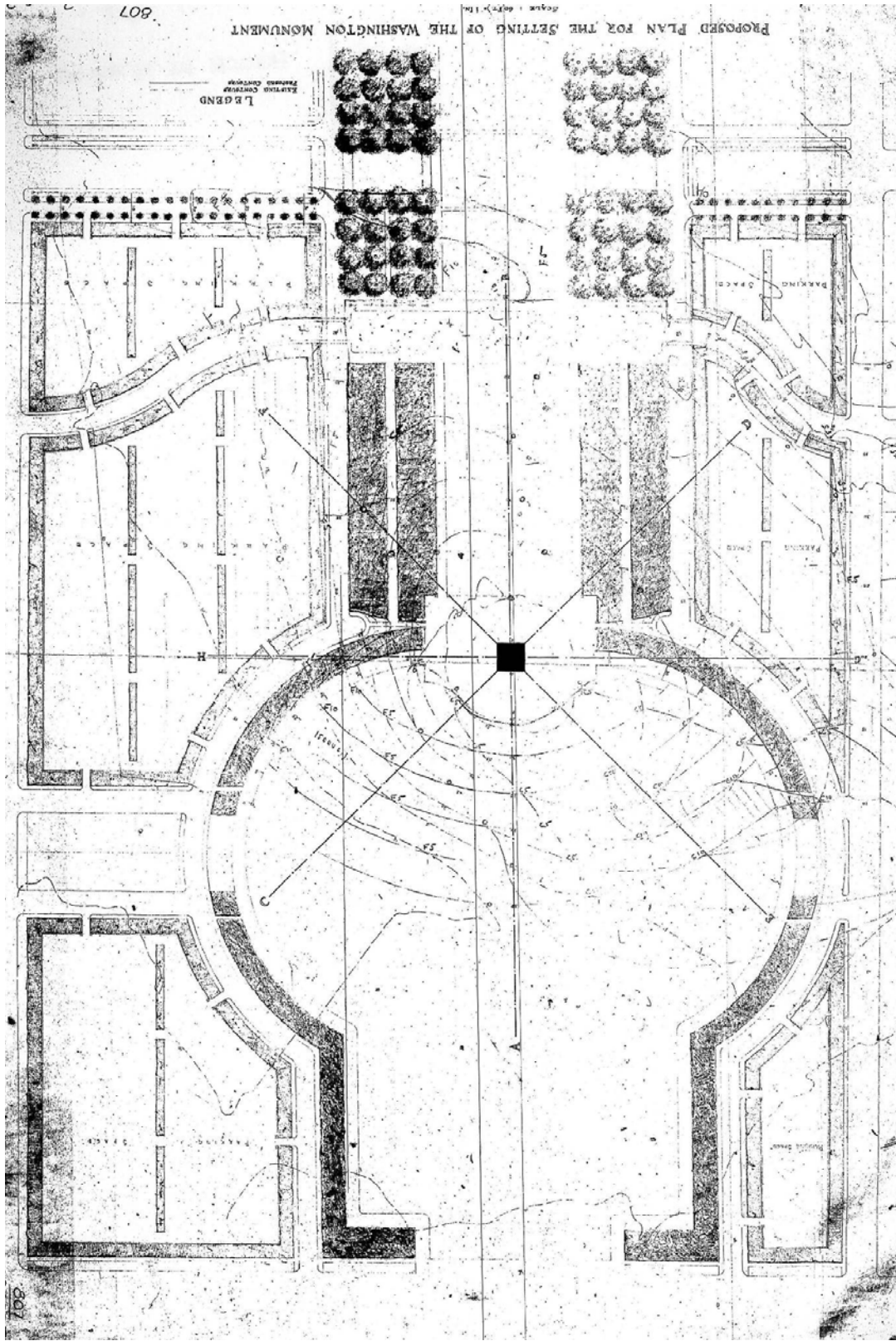
---

<sup>62</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “High Noon on the Mall: Modernism versus Traditionalism, 1910-1970, in *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991*, ed., Richard Longstreth (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2002), 146.

<sup>63</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 50; Grant, 27-30.

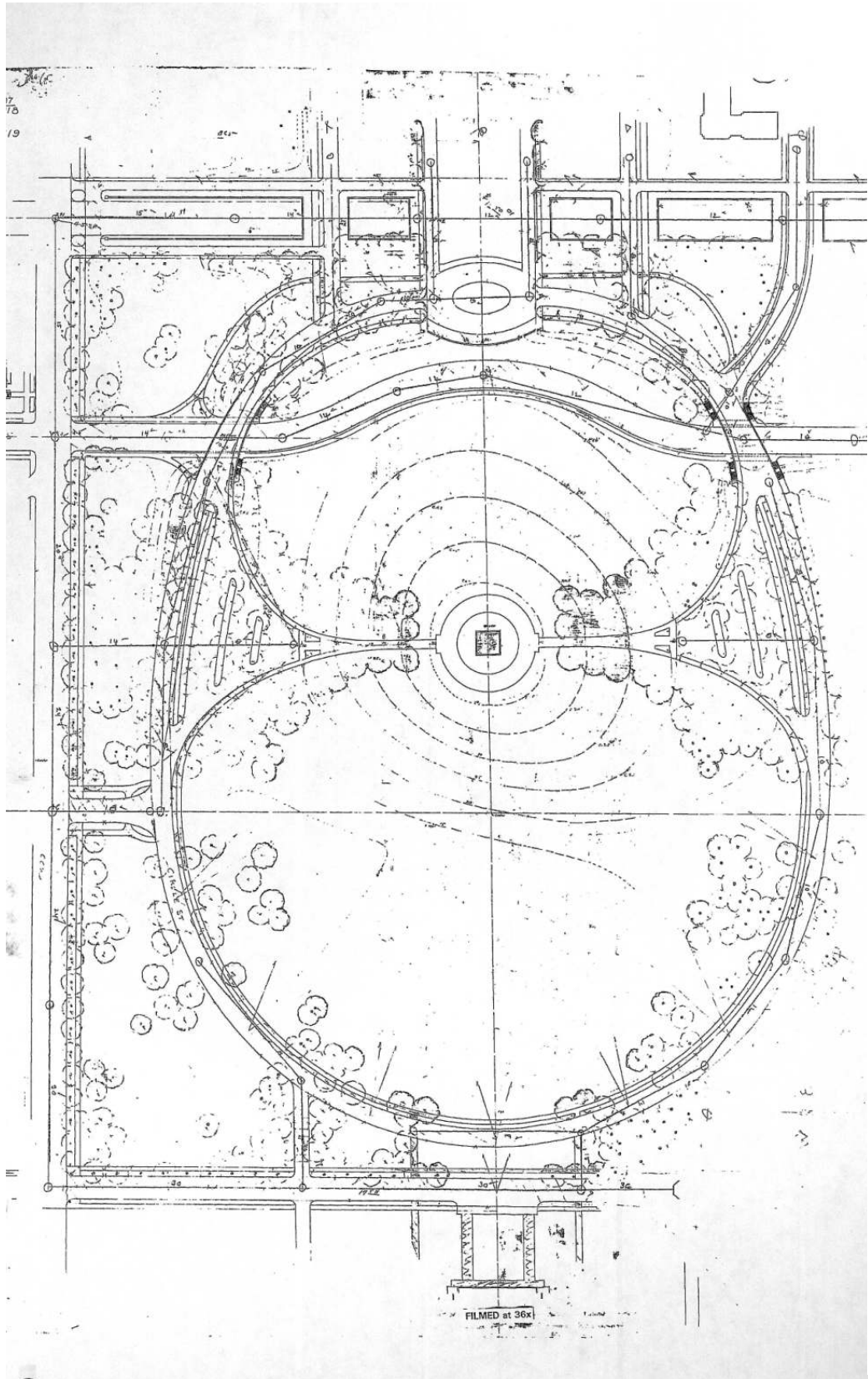
<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter 2, p. 50; Grant, 30-31.

<sup>65</sup> Grant, 35.



**Figure 24:** William Delano's alternate plans for the Washington Monument Grounds called the "Balustrade or Formal Plan" in 1931 (one of two alternate plans for the Monument Grounds, later revised in 1932). The scheme included rows of elms and paths extending onto the monument grounds that continued the lines of the Reflecting Pool and offset the unbalanced monument with an elliptical masonry structure extending on the east portion of the site. Delano's Balustrade Plan was later eliminated as too invasive and a potential threat to the Washington Monument's stability ("Proposed Plan for the Setting of the Washington Monument," William A. Delano, 1932. National Archives, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, NCP 807\_84095, copy located in Robinson & Assoc. "Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds." June 10, 2002 ).





**Figure 25:** Olmsted's alternate design for the Washington Monument Grounds, the "Informal Plan," was intended to eliminate extensive amounts of disturbance to the grounds and called for a circumferential road around the Washington Monument to connect the Mall roads to the Lincoln Memorial. His plan also recommended creating an underpass at 14<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate "business traffic" and leaving the above-ground roads for sightseers. Olmsted's vision was less regularized than the McMillan Plan and included a more naturalistic setting, with elm trees planted in sweeping clusters to provide views and vistas from north to south. Olmsted emphasized the importance of views of the Washington Monument from a number of vantage points, both as a pedestrian and in an automobile, which included the dominant formal alley looking both east and west of the monument. Both Olmsted and Delano's plans proposed to extend 15<sup>th</sup> Street in a curvilinear fashion through the Monument Grounds ("Informal Scheme Study," Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Henry Hubbard, 1932. Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1771-1991*).

later date.<sup>66</sup> Despite recommendations for further improvement, nothing completely materialized from the proposals.

In 1934, plans were drawn for widening 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and – according to a National Capital Parks *Master Plan* drawing and National Park Service *Progress Plan* drawing in 1936 – the northwestern portion of the circumferential roadway within the Monument Grounds was eliminated (Figure 26).<sup>67</sup> The western edge of the NMAAHC site is, for the first time, formed by the curvilinear route of 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Development on the road system and configuration of the grounds continued throughout the 1930s, and resulted in several proposals for improvement. The National Capital Parks and Planning Commission published a 1939 development plan for the Mall, which included reconfiguring the circumferential road into a more regular, elliptical shape and repositioning 15<sup>th</sup> Street to create a more symmetrical curve (Figure 27). The development plan is particularly indicative of the evolution of the western part of the Mall, including the Monument Grounds, and how it diverged from the McMillan Plan over the course of forty years into a naturalistic landscape. Many of these changes were directed by Olmsted with the general spirit of the L’Enfant Plan in mind, but also acknowledging the existing natural conditions in the city.<sup>68</sup> The Monument Grounds continued to progress in the pastoral tradition that had been solidified by Olmsted’s “Informal Plan.”

The United States’ involvement in World War II brought major changes to the Washington Monument Grounds in 1942, including the construction of additional temporary federal office buildings that were only intended to last through World War I. During and after World War II, the McMillan Plan was essentially replaced as the framework for park and public building development by new policies advocating dispersed public buildings, highway-oriented development, and urban redevelopment inspired by suburban planning principles.<sup>69</sup> A dual roadway system that extended Independence Avenue along the south portion of the grounds was constructed in 1943 (Figure 28). The dual parkway system was laid in a similar position to Olmsted’s 1931 proposed circumferential road.<sup>70</sup>

#### *Post- World War II Development (1945-Present)*

Numerous attempts to better integrate the Monument Grounds and remove visitors’ cars were initiated following World War II, but none were fully implemented. Thomas Jeffers acted on the improvement of the Monument Grounds with his 1948 plan to eliminate the existing circumferential road. By this time the road had become obsolete due to the Independence Avenue extension, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Commission

---

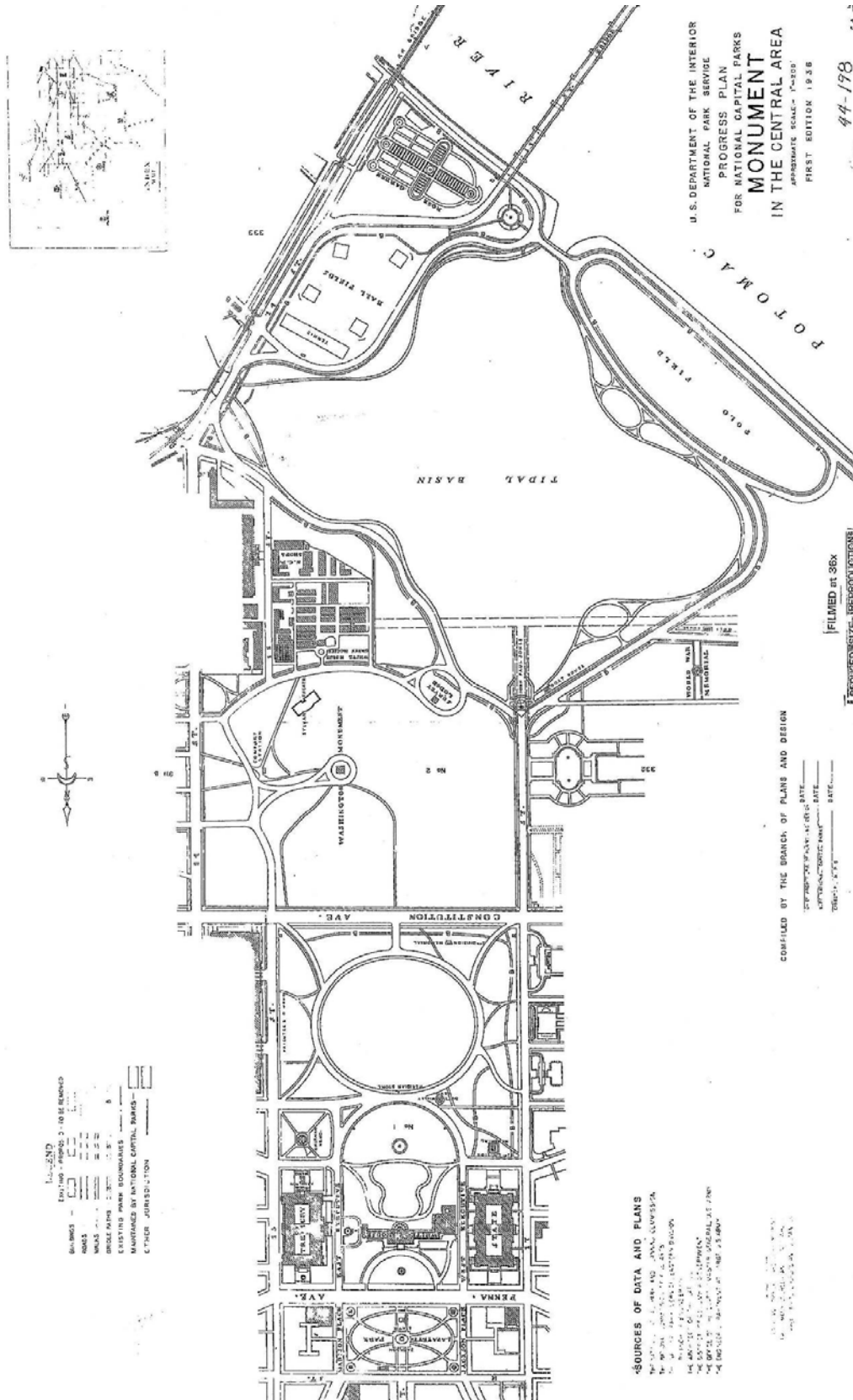
<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 42-43.

<sup>67</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p.38-39.

<sup>68</sup> Streathfield, 136.

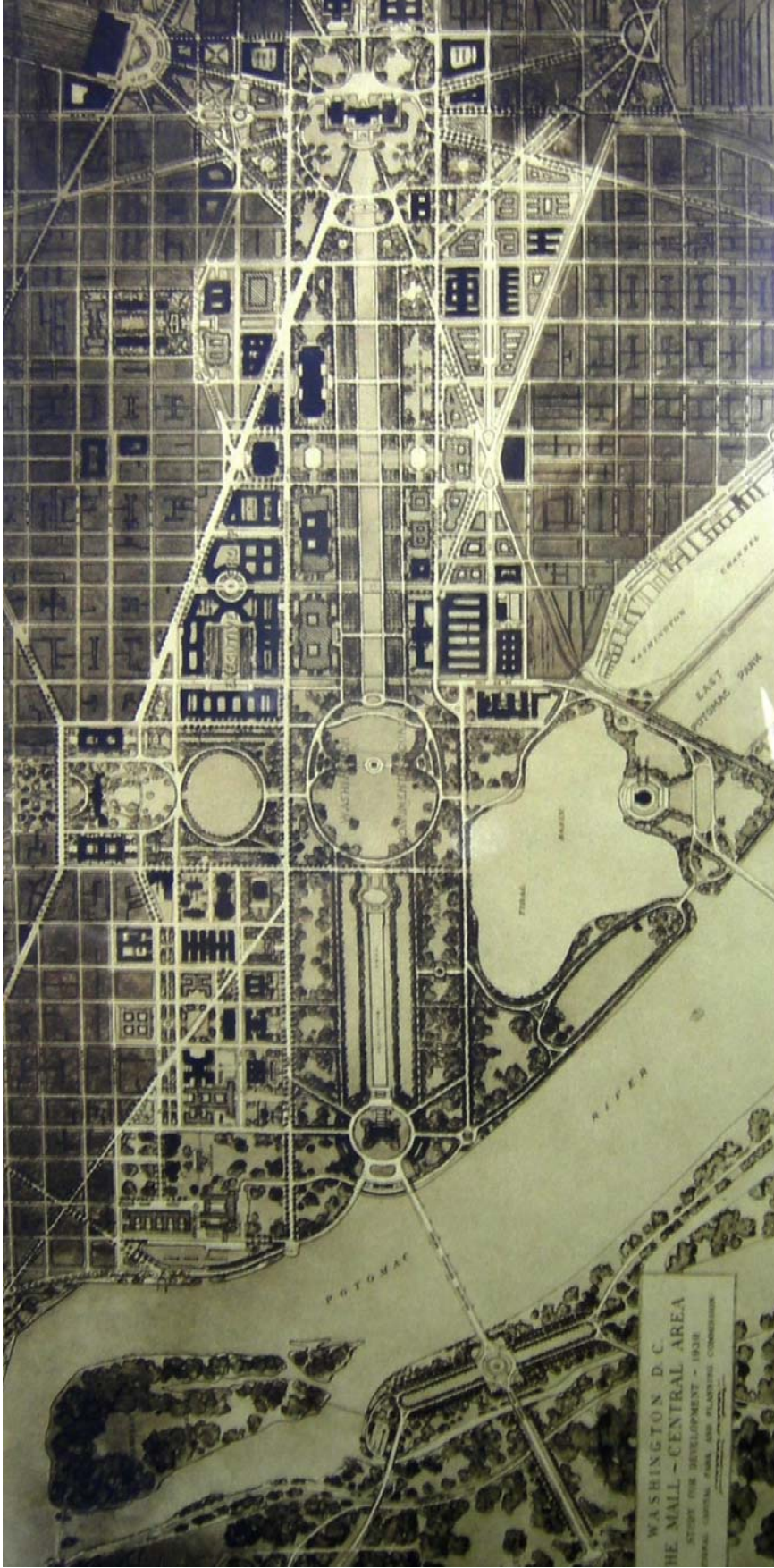
<sup>69</sup> Robinson & Associates, “Plan of the City of Washington,” 98.

<sup>70</sup> Miller Associates, chapter 2, p.61; Streathfield, 137.



**Figure 26:** Development of the road system and configuration of the Washington Monument Grounds continued throughout the 1930s, and resulted in several proposals for improvement. In 1934, plans were drawn for widening 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and – according to a National Capital Parks “Master Plan” drawing and National Park Service “Progress Plan” drawing in 1936 – the northwestern portion of the circumferential roadway within the Monument Grounds was eliminated. The western edge of the NMAAHC site is formed by the curvilinear route of 15<sup>th</sup> Street. (“Progress Plan for National Capital Parks Monument in the Central Area,” U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1936. National Archives, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, NCP 807\_84198, copy located in Robinson & Assoc., “Preliminary Findings, Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds,” June 10, 2002).





**Figure 27:** The National Capital Parks and Planning Commission published a 1939 development plan for the Mall, which included reconfiguring the circumferential road into a more regular, elliptical shape and repositioning 15<sup>th</sup> Street to create a more symmetrical curve. The development plan is particularly indicative of the evolution of the western part of the Mall, including the Monument Grounds, and how it diverged in concept from the McMillan Plan over the course of forty years into a naturalistic landscape. Many of these changes were directed by Olmsted with the general spirit of the L'Enfant Plan in mind, but also acknowledging the existing natural conditions in the city (National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, "Study for Development," 1939. National Archives, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission).





of Fine Arts approved the plan as a continuation of Olmsted's 1931 scheme (Figure 29).<sup>71</sup> However, like many proposed plans for the grounds, Jeffers' design was never fully implemented.

Throughout World War II, areas around the Washington Monument and the western section of the mall were occupied by temporary buildings to house government workers (Figure 30-31).<sup>72</sup> The temporaries not only obscured the view toward the west of the city, it also hampered the development of the landscape. The "tempors" east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street on the Washington Monument Grounds were not removed until 1964.<sup>73</sup> A photographic view from the Washington Monument in 1945 shows the north eastern portion of the current NMAAHC site (Figure 32). The circulation appears to be similar to the current cross sidewalk pattern that exists today with what appears to be a tennis court on the western side. A circle of permanent flags was erected around the base of the Monument in 1959.<sup>74</sup>

The Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM) 1965-66 master plan for the Mall represented a turn from informal, picturesque landscapes to more formal planning principles presented in the earlier McMillan Plan. In conjunction with Dan Kiley, landscape architect, SOM sought to redevelop the National Mall and restore the sense of formality between the Capitol Building and the Lincoln Memorial. The plan included double rows of trees on either side of the *tapis vert* to provide a shaded walkway along graveled paths and the cross axes of major buildings on the Mall would be marked with fountains and paved courts.<sup>75</sup> One of the main considerations of the SOM design for the Mall was the fact that tourism had become Washington's third-largest industry, with approximately 12.8 million visitors in 1965. The master plan, as it was updated through the 1970s, was intended to eliminate the detrimental effects of automobiles on the Mall. Washington and Adams Drives were closed to vehicular traffic and gravel paths were installed for pedestrians. Over a ten-year period, in anticipation of the Bicentennial, more modest aspects of the SOM plan were implemented by the National Park Service.<sup>76</sup> The German-American Friendship Garden was constructed on the north end of the Washington Monument Grounds in 1987-88.<sup>77</sup>

Several plans for improving the Monument grounds throughout the 1980s were proposed, but never implemented. In 1993, a plan was prepared to restore the Monument Lodge as the entrance to a new underground visitor's center. Included in this plan was the realignment of 15<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Streathfield, 137.

<sup>72</sup> No temporary buildings were placed on the NMAAHC site.

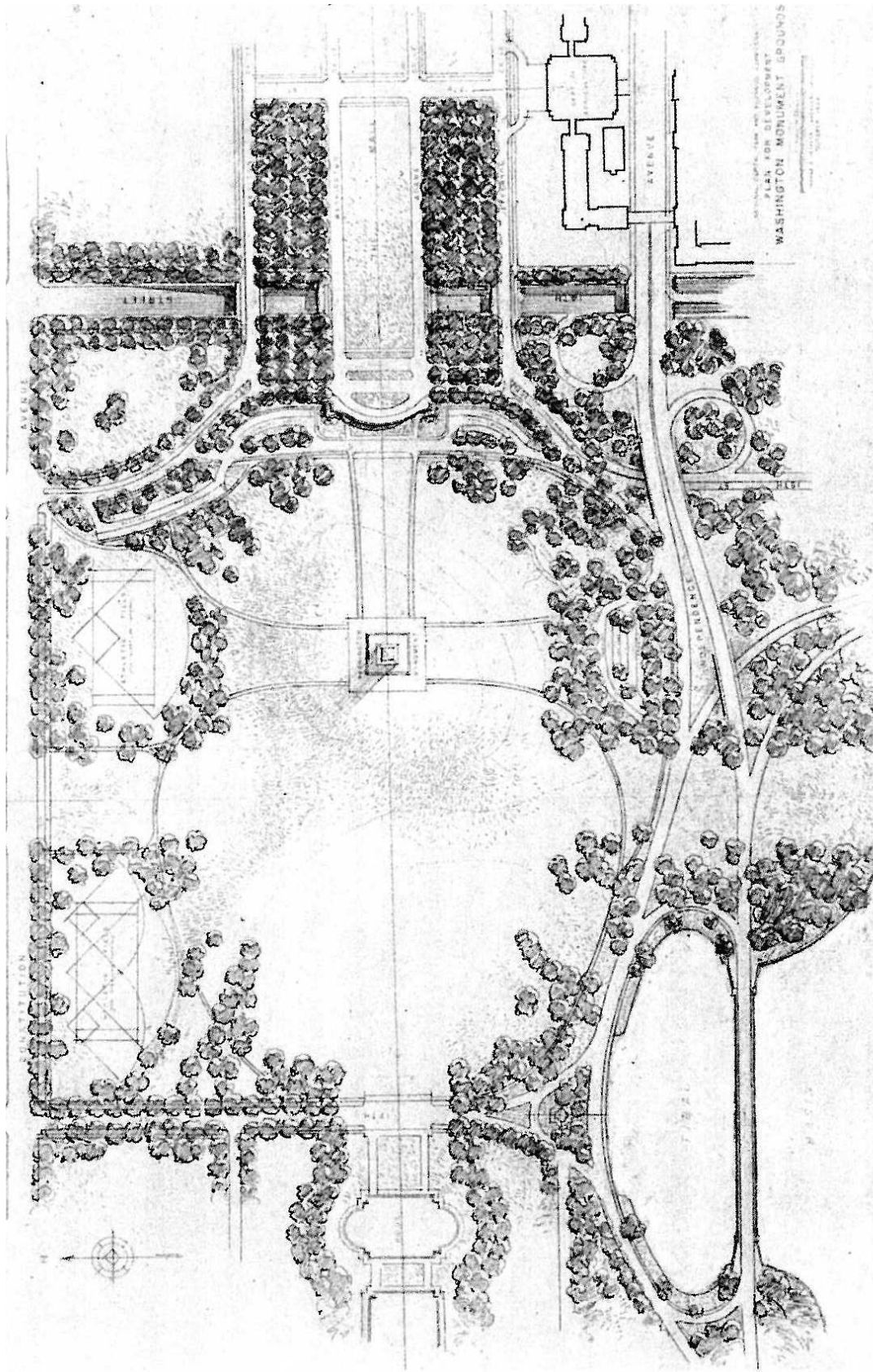
<sup>73</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 2, p. 63.

<sup>74</sup> HABS, National Mall and Monument Grounds, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Streathfield, 138.

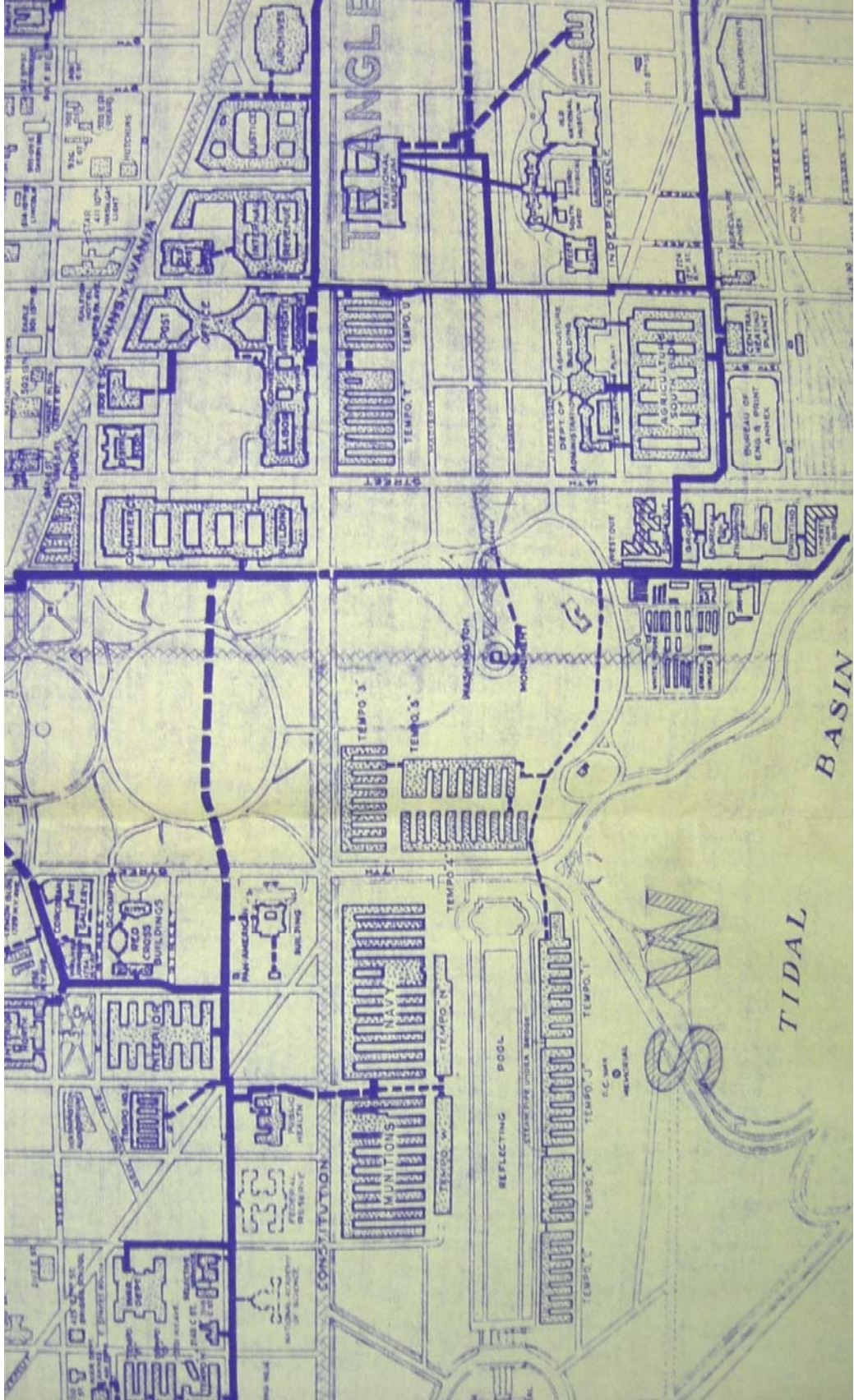
<sup>76</sup> George Olszewski, *History of the Mall* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, History Division, 1970), 97-98; HABS, Mall and Monument Grounds, 25-26; Gutheim, 331-32.

<sup>77</sup> HABS, National Mall and Monument Grounds, 4.



**Figure 29:** Numerous attempts to better integrate the Monument Grounds and remove visitors' cars were initiated following World War II, but none were fully implemented. Thomas Jeffers acted on the improvement of the Monument Grounds with his 1948 plan to eliminate the existing circumferential road. By this time the road had become obsolete due to the Independence Avenue extension, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts approved the plan as a continuation of Olmsted's 1931 scheme. However, like many proposed plans for the grounds, Jeffers' design was never fully implemented (Thomas C. Jeffers, "Plan for Development, Washington Monument Grounds," 1948. Reproduced in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington: 1771-1991*).





**Figure 30:** Throughout World War II, areas around the Washington Monument and the western section of the mall were occupied by temporary buildings to house government workers. The temporaries not only obscured the view toward the west of the city, it also hampered development of the landscape. The “tempo” east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street on the Washington Monument Grounds were not removed until 1964. The NMAAHC site escaped this tempo construction (Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration, “Public Buildings in the Metropolitan Area of Washington, D.C.”; n.d. National Archives, RG 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission).





**Figure 31:** Aerial view of “tempos” on the western portion of the Washington Monument Grounds, 1943 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USZ62-132352).



**Figure 32:** A photographic view from the Washington Monument in 1945 shows the northeastern portion of the current NMAAHC site. The circulation appears to be similar to the current crossed sidewalk pattern that exists today. There also appears to be a tennis court on the western side of the site (View from Washington Monument, 1945. Farm Security Administration, Office of War Information Collection. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USW31-058719-C).

Street, Madison Avenue, and Jefferson Avenue. The restoration of the Monument Lodge was never completed, but the realignment of the three streets was completed in 2000.<sup>78</sup> The perimeter security project designed by Olin Partnership of Philadelphia was completed in 2001-2003.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Milner Associates, chapter 3, p.10; National Park Service, *Washington Monument Permanent Security Improvements Environmental Assessment*, (Washington, D.C.: April 2002), 30-31.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, chapter 2, p.69.





## AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

### *Significant Resources*

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (CFR 36 § 800.4), SI and NCPC have made extensive potential identification of directly and indirectly affected historic resources within a broad area of potential effect related to the future construction of the NMAAHC. The undertaking was a complex task aimed at accounting for the multiple layers of historic resources found in the area surrounding the NMAAHC site. The historically significant features include buildings, streets, historic districts, landscape features, monuments and memorials, and elements of the L'Enfant and McMillan plans, as identified by the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks Survey, and the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites. Also consulted were cultural resource plans produced by the White House Precinct, as well as National Park Service Cultural Landscape Inventories and Cultural Landscape Reports for the Mall and Washington Monument Grounds. The resulting conclusions are illustrated in a series of three maps: "Plan of the City of Washington: Contributing Streets, Reservations, and Appropriations," "Historic Districts and Contributing Properties," and "Individually Listed Historic Properties." The Area of Potential Effect for the NMAAHC project has been officially determined as part of the Section 106 process, and is illustrated on the three preceding maps. The geographic area includes the Lincoln Memorial as the western-most boundary, West Potomac Park and the Tidal Basin to the south, the Bureau of Printing and Engraving and Department of Agriculture buildings, the Mall and Smithsonian Institution buildings north of Independence Avenue, as well as the west Capitol steps as the eastern terminus, the Federal Triangle and Pennsylvania Avenue Historic Districts, the White House, 17<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District as the northern boundary, and buildings lining the north of Constitution Avenue.

The map entitled "Plan of the City of Washington: Contributing Streets, Reservations, and Appropriations" (Appendix A-1) relies on the draft National Historic Landmark designation prepared by Robinson & Associates in 2002, which is currently held at the office of the DC SHPO. This document provides the current definitions for the eligibility of the Plan for the City of Washington. As defined in the nomination, the city plan is a culmination of efforts between 1791 and 1942 and meets National Historic Landmark Criterion 1 (association with events that represent the broad national patterns of United States history) for its relationship with the creation of the new United States of America, the creation of a capital city, and the emerging field of city planning in the early twentieth century. It also meets Criterion 4 (embodying the distinguishing characteristics of a period, style, or method of construction) as a well-preserved, comprehensive, Baroque plan with Beaux Arts modifications. Contributing features of the plan include L'Enfant and McMillan Plan streets, appropriations, and reservations as indicated on the map. Original appropriations and reservations were delineated in both the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans as defining characteristics of the city and retain significance as major features of the city plan. Streets and diagonal avenues are identified as significant resources in the L'Enfant plan and serve as important axes, cross-axes, and boundaries within the plan.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Robinson & Associates, "Plan of the City of Washington," 18-25.

The map entitled “Historic Districts and Contributing Properties” (Appendix A-2) defines historic districts and contributing properties therein as determined by the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmark Program, and District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites. For reasons of clarity, only contributing properties within a reasonable proximity to the NMAAHC site were included. This is particularly true of the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, which contains nearly one hundred contributing features. Contributing features within the National Mall Historic District are not included in the 1981 National Register nomination, and as a result were not included in this draft report. However, The National Park Service *Cultural Landscape Inventory: The Mall* describes buildings and landscape features within the denoted historic district boundaries that are treated as historically significant resources.<sup>81</sup>

The map entitled “Individually Listed Historic Properties” (Appendix A-3) depicts resources that are individually listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks, or District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites. Currently, the Washington Monument is listed as an individual landmark with boundaries encompassing the entire grounds – the area bounded by Constitution Avenue, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Wallenberg Place, East Basin Drive and 17<sup>th</sup> Street, in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C. As a result, historic features within the Washington Monument Grounds are not included in the National Register nomination. John Milner & Associates’ draft *Cultural Landscape Inventory* (2003) does not include a list of contributing features within the Monument Grounds; however this may be revised in the final version.

### *Views and Vistas*

The Washington Monument Grounds is dominated by the towering shaft of the Washington Monument, which serves as a powerful organizing element for the Mall, East and West Potomac Park, and much of the city of Washington. Within the Mall area, the Washington Monument serves as an approximate marker of the central point of the two main axes as designated by the L’Enfant Plan (1791) and the McMillan Plan (1901-02). Unobstructed and partial views and vistas to and from the monument serve as a point of orientation for the visitor in terms of direction and distance. The NMAAHC site sits to the northeast of the Washington Monument’s grassy knoll, which serves as a hub for the surrounding landscape. The knoll and plaza afford the observer commanding views of the Monument Grounds, Mall, and surrounding historically significant landmarks. Vegetation and topography within the monument grounds screen views of adjacent buildings, such as the Survey Lodge and Sylvan Theater, creating the appearance of

---

<sup>81</sup> The DC SHPO concurred with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) in September 2006 in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The CLI determined that while the Mall is not currently a National Historic Landmark, it clearly deemed worthy of national significance and the contributing features included therein are determined eligible as well. The CLI defines the periods of significance for the Mall as 1791-92, the date of the L’Enfant Plan and Andrew Ellicott’s Revisions, and from 1901-1975, dates that include the McMillan Plan to the year when the last tree was planted on the Mall. For more detail on the development and features within the study boundaries see; National Park Service, *Cultural Landscape Inventory: The Mall*. Washington, D.C.: NPS, 2006.

an open green area of land from viewpoints outside of the Monument Grounds. The Monument Lodge occupies a more primary location east of the Monument.

The creation of planned vistas was an important design feature of L'Enfant as well as of the McMillan Commission. Because vistas are not among the Property and Resource Types recognized by the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program, they are not counted as contributing features. However, these features add to the special qualities of the city of Washington and were deliberately created as part of the plans.<sup>82</sup> For the purpose of this report, the term “vista” defines views of primary importance that were specifically planned, designed, and implemented, while the term “view” describes those unplanned views that occurred naturally or resulted from the construction of other features.

A principal tenet of L'Enfant's plan was the “reciprocity of sight” he deliberately incorporated between major public buildings or memorials on elevated points of land throughout the city – such as those currently found on the major cross axis between the White House/Jefferson Memorial and the Capitol/Lincoln Memorial. Primary vistas recognized by both the L'Enfant and McMillan plans consist of view sheds from the U.S. Capitol along the Mall to the Lincoln Memorial and the western horizon, and the view from the White House across the Ellipse to the Jefferson Memorial and the southern horizon. Vistas along radiating avenues were designed to provide oblique views of major buildings, monuments and parks indicating their orientation in plan. Pennsylvania and New York Avenues provide views of the White House precinct, while the vista along Virginia Avenue terminates at the Washington Monument. In addition, vistas along orthogonal streets provide frontal views of major buildings and surrounding landscapes. Constitution and Independence Avenues serve as major corridors in the city's monumental core, and provide important vistas to and from the Washington Monument Grounds.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Robinson & Associates, “Plan of the City of Washington,” 32.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, “Plan of the City of Washington,” 33-41.





## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Willam C. *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001.
- Barber, Lucy G. *Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.
- Bowling, Kenneth. *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*. Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988.
- Bustard, Bruce I. *Washington Behind the Monuments*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1990.
- Cameron, Robert. *Above Washington: A Collection of Nostalgic and Contemporary Aerial Photographs of the District of Columbia*. San Francisco: Cameron and Company, 1983.
- Fitzpatrick, Sandra and Maria R. Goodwin. *The Guide to Black Washington: Places and Events of Historical and Cultural Significance in the Nation's Capital*, Revised Edition. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1999.
- Froneck, Thomas, ed. *An Illustrated History: The City of Washington* by The Junior League of Washington. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.
- Gillette, Howard, Jr., ed. *Southern City National Ambition: The Growth of Early Washington, D.C., 1800-1860*. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University and American Architectural Foundation, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Goode, James M. and Laura Burd Schiavo. *Washington Images: Rare Maps and Prints from the Albert H. Small Collection*. Washington, D.C.: Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 2004.
- Green, Constance McLaughlin. *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Gutheim, Frederick. *The Potomac*. Rivers of America Books, ed. Hervey Allen and Carl Carmer. New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., Inc, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Worthy of a Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital*.

Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1977.

Gutheim, Frederick and Antoinette J. Lee. *Worthy of the Nation: Washington, DC from L'Enfant to the National Capital Planning Commission*, 2d ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

Hutchinson, Louise Daniel. *The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977.

Kohler, Sue. *Commission of Fine Arts: A Brief History, 1910-1976*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1991.

Longstreth, Richard, ed. *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991*, Studies in the History of Art, no. 30. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991.

Miller, Frederic M. and Howard Gillette, Jr. *Washington Seen: A Photographic History, 1875-1965*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1995.

Miller, Iris. *Washington in Maps: 1606-2000*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2002.

Moore, Charles, ed. *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*. 57<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Senate Report 166, 1902.

Passonneau, Joseph R. *Washington Through Two Centuries: A History in Maps and Images*. New York: Monticelli Press, Inc., 2004.

Reps, John W. *Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Washington on View: The Nation's Capital Since 1790*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Ricks, Mary Kay. *Escape on the Pearl: The Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad*. New York: Harper Collins, 2007.

### **Unpublished Sources, National Register Documentation, HABS/HAER Reports**

Historic American Building Survey. L'Enfant-McMillan Plan of Washington. D.C. No. DC-668 by Elizabeth J. Barthold, ed., Sara Amy Leach, Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. The National Mall and Monument Grounds (Reservation Numbers 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 4, 5, 6, 6A). No. DC-687, by Elizabeth J. Barthold. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. East Potomac Park (Reservation No. 332, Hains Point). No. DC-692, by Sara Amy Leach and Elizabeth J. Barthold. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. Washington Monument. No. DC-428, by Aaron V. Wunsch. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1994.

Historic American Engineering Record. Tidal Reservoir. HAER DC WASH, 574 by Mary Kendall Shipe. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. 1988.

National Register of Historic Places-Documentation of Existing National Register Property. "Washington Monument." Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 5 Feb 1981.

Robinson & Associates, Inc.. National Register of Historic Places -Nomination Form. "East and West Potomac Parks Historic District." Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. National Historic Landmark-Nomination Form. "Plan of the City of Washington" (draft) Washington, D.C.: January 4, 2001. Updates and amends Sara Amy Leach and Elizabeth Barthold, National Register of Historic Places-Register Form, "L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, D.C." (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 24, 1997).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Preliminary Findings Cultural Landscape Report, Washington Monument Grounds." June 10, 2002.

## **Government Documents**

Boyle, Susan Calafate. *The White House & President's Park Cultural Landscape Report, Site History, and Evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001. Robinson & Associates library files.

District of Columbia, Office of Public Records. "Chronology of Some Events in the History of the District of Columbia." By Philip W. Ogilvie, ca. 1988.

District of Columbia Historic District Brochures, including *Greater U Street Historic District, Anacostia, Greater 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Logan Circle Historic District, Capitol Hill Historic District, Mount Vernon Square Historic District*. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, 1999-2006.

Fanning, Kay. *National Park Service Cultural Landscape Inventory: National Mall and*

*Memorial Parks, The Mall.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2006.

John Milner Associates, Inc. *Washington Monument and Grounds Cultural Landscape Report [Initial Draft]*. Prepared for the National Park Service Denver Service Center National Capital Region, Washington, D.C., May 2003.

McQuirter, Marya Annette. *African American Heritage Trail, Washington, D.C.* Washington, D.C.: Cultural Tourism D.C, 2003.

Olszewski, George J. *History of the Mall.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, History Division, 1970.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A History of the Washington Monument, 1844-1968, Washington, D.C.* Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 1971.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the District of Columbia. *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia.* Ed. by Charles Moore. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1902.

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *Comprehensive Design Plan: The White House & President's Park.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 2000.

### **Archival Sources**

National Archives and Records Administration. Record Group 76, Records of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, College Park, Maryland.

National Archives and Records Administration. Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service, Cartographic Division, College Park, Maryland.

National Archives and Records Administration. Record Group 328, Records of the National Capital Planning Commission, Cartographic Division, College Park, Maryland.

National Capital Planning Commission. Files related to Washington Monument Grounds and the National Mall, Washington, D.C.

Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division, Prints and photographs related to the Washington Monument and National Mall, Washington, D.C.